



# Microsoft visual identity guidelines

August 2012

The Microsoft visual identity system capitalizes on our next wave of product offerings. It helps us be simple, clear, and direct. It elevates the content that matters most. It creates delightful connections.

The Microsoft logo celebrates our heritage and our future. It highlights the role we play in many consumers' lives today, and the increasing breadth of unexpected and innovative products we are delivering.

The identity elements—logo, typography, color, grids, tiles, imagery, and icons—make it easier to create memorable internal and external communications.

# Our visual elements express our brand

These guidelines are your introduction to how we can use the visual identity as a thread that ties Microsoft-branded offerings and groups together. They are a call to action to align our creative work and bring a new focus on our connected visual identity system.

Our shared elements unite the things we offer, and when they're used together—again and again—they become the foundation for the stories that we want our brand, our products, and our services, to tell.

For questions regarding the new visual identity system, please see Brand Tools or contact the Microsoft brand team at [corbrand@microsoft.com](mailto:corbrand@microsoft.com).

- 1 The role of the Microsoft brand
- 2 Identity system elements
- 7 Logo
- 17 Logotype
- 23 Typography
- 32 Color
- 39 Grids
- 41 Tiles
- 54 Photography
- 57 Illustration
- 59 Icons
- 61 Putting it all together
- 70 Showcase

# What brand should I use, and how does this guide fit in?

At Microsoft, we have a portfolio of world-class product brands. Through our shared design elements and principles, these brands communicate a united vision to our audiences.

When we create communications which are not associated with any one product brand (e.g., Windows or Office), or which are associated with more than one product brand, Microsoft becomes the lead brand.

These guidelines cover both the shared design elements that are used by all Microsoft brands and product brands, as well as the elements used only for Microsoft led communications.

Shared elements across the entire Microsoft portfolio

Logo      Color      Type      Imagery

Microsoft      Bing      Office      Skype      Windows      Visual Studio      XBOX

Microsoft and product brands

## Logo



## Tile



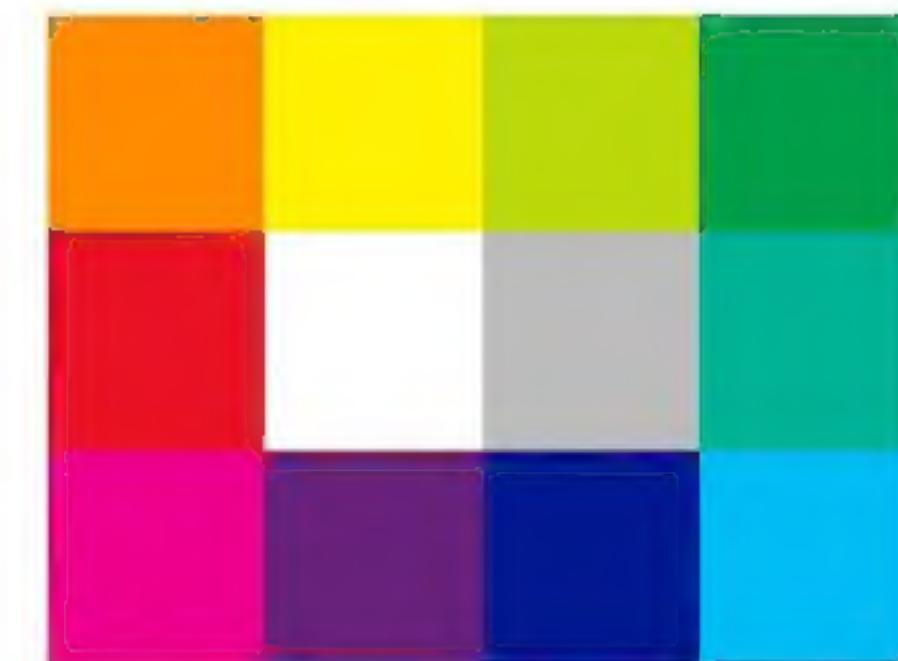
## Layout grids



## Content tiles



## Color



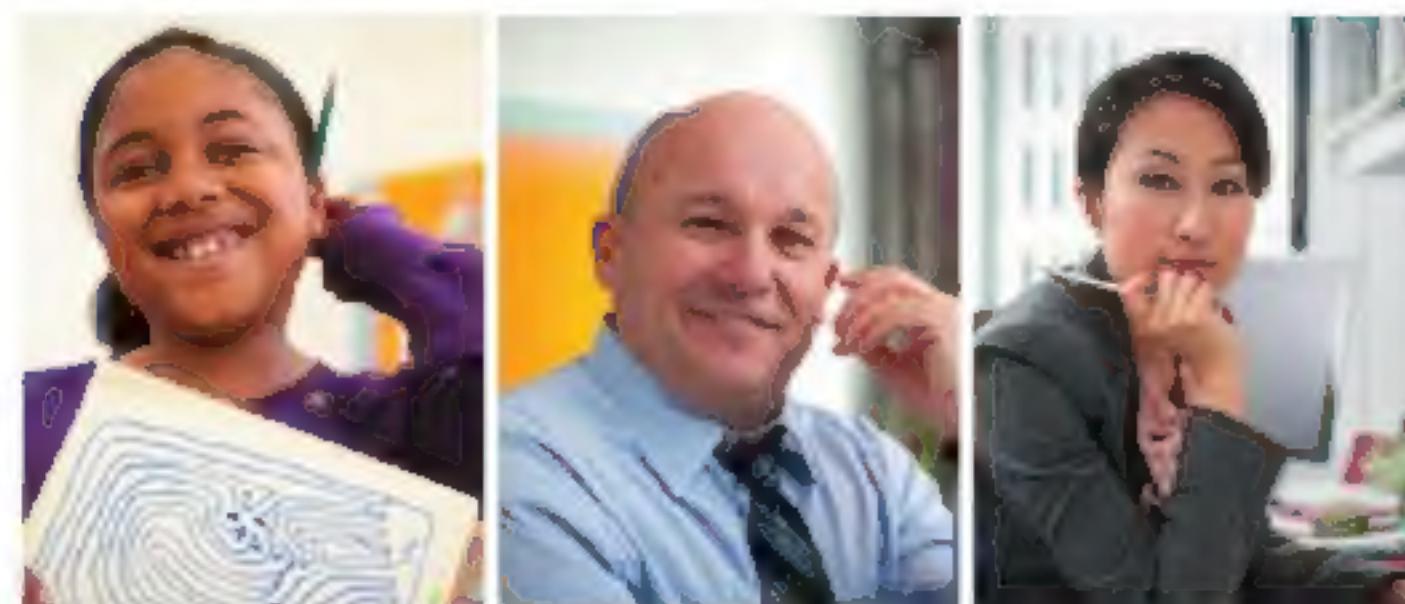
## Type

Segoe Light

Segoe Regular

Segoe Bold

## Photography



## Illustration



## Perfect time for a new logo.

As Microsoft prepares to release an unprecedented wave of new products and connected experiences across PCs, phones, tablets, and TVs, we felt our logo should evolve as well, visually accentuating this new era.

The new Microsoft logo is familiar and welcoming, drawing upon the heritage of our brand values, typeface, and colors. The symbol is built for the digital world, supporting the diversity of our businesses, representing and endorsing our products and services.



# Microsoft

All Microsoft  
branded marketing  
communications  
must use the full  
color logo

The Microsoft logo must be used on 100%  
of internal and external communications.  
The logo is intended for use by corporate  
organizations and facilities; certifications and  
subscriptions; programs and events; competitions;  
corporate solutions (multiproduct); hardware;  
and Microsoft technologies, services, and products.

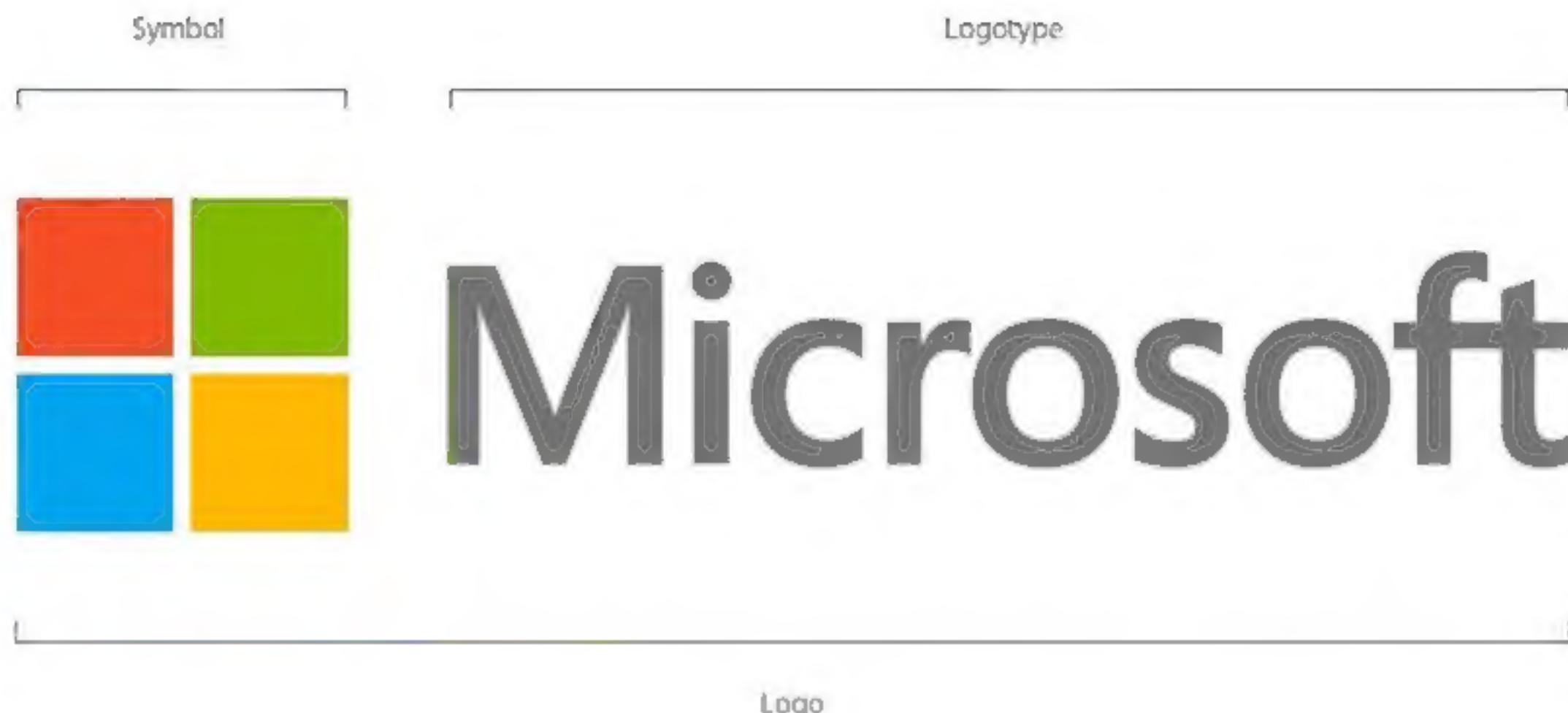


Microsoft

## The logo = symbol + logotype

The logo has two components – the symbol with multiple squares of color intended to symbolize the company's diverse portfolio of products, and the logotype that uses the Segoe typeface used in our products and marketing communications.

The symbol must be used as part of the logo in all communications. The symbol alone is only used as a favorites icon by MSCOM, Microsoft Store, and for corporate sites: Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. No other use is allowed. If you have questions, contact [corbrand@microsoft.com](mailto:corbrand@microsoft.com).



## Let the logo breathe

### Clear space

We respect the logo by giving it some space. The minimum clear space that must surround the logo is equivalent to the height of its capital M.

### Minimum size

In print, the logo should never appear smaller than 1" (25 mm). On-screen, it must appear at least 70 pixels wide.

### Registration marks

In marketing, registration marks on the logo are no longer necessary, except in consumer packaging applications.

### Clear space



### Minimum size



## Color variations

Use the full-color logo. Use the positive version (logotype in gray) on light or white backgrounds. The full-color reverse logo may be used on dark color backgrounds, as well as dark areas within photographs.

1-color white, black, gray-scale or vertical version of the logos are available for limited use. Please contact [corbrand@microsoft.com](mailto:corbrand@microsoft.com) for guidance on use of this artwork.

Full-color positive



Full-color reverse



## Logo

## Acceptable backgrounds for the full-color logo

The full-color logo may be shown on any of the colors shown here or on simple areas of photographs. See page 33 for color values.



## Use the display version of the logo for very large applications

The standard version of the logo is optimized for use at small sizes, making it the best choice for most marketing applications. Subtle adjustments have been made to the standard logo to help it reproduce cleanly and clearly at small sizes. However, these adjustments—called ink traps—are distracting and unnecessary when the logo is enlarged.

If the logo will be displayed at a size where the M in the logotype is more than 1 inch (25 mm) tall, use the display logo artwork. Contact [corbrand@microsoft.com](mailto:corbrand@microsoft.com) to request display logo files.

### Logo

Standard logo



Display logo





Do not change the size relationship of the symbol to the logotype



Don't place the logo on backgrounds that provide insufficient contrast



Don't add effects like shadows, dimensions, and gradients to the logo



Don't create logo "ockups" by adding text in close proximity to the logo



Don't stretch the logo



Don't compress the logo



Don't place the logo over busy photographic backgrounds



Don't alter the color specifications within the symbol or the logotype



Do not attach text of any kind to the symbol

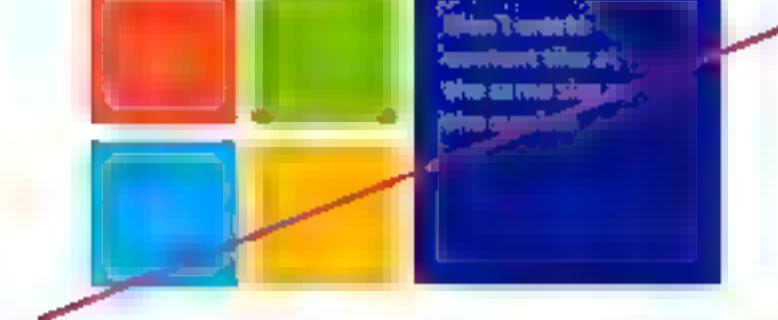
## Logo (don'ts)



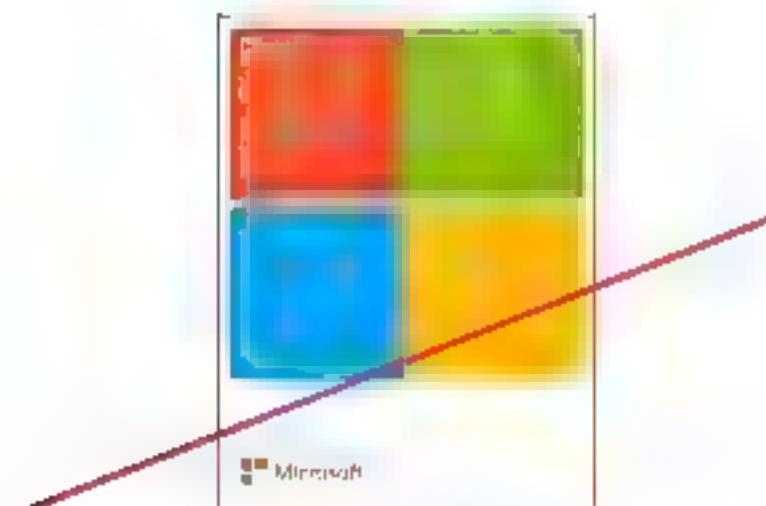
Don't create multi-color logos for any sub-brand, business group or division. Only the master brand may use multiple colors.



Don't use the symbol by itself in email signatures. Refer to page 83 for the approved email signatures.



Don't create content tiles at the same size as the symbol.



Don't create patterns of tiles to simulate the elements of the logo symbol.

Sometimes  
Microsoft leads,  
sometimes it  
endorses

In cases where the full color Microsoft logo cannot be used or where Microsoft is endorsing a featured product brand such as Office, Windows, or Xbox, use the logotype only.

The Microsoft logo or logotype must appear on 100% of all communications.

For use in broadcast advertising or animation please contact corbrand@microsoft.com

Microsoft branded communications



Microsoft endorsed communications



All Microsoft endorsed communications must use the logotype.

When Microsoft is the endorser, we use the logotype only. This lets people know the message is from Microsoft, while allowing the lead brand to occupy the spotlight.

The Microsoft logotype must be used as the endorser on all print and digital communications including online, print and TV advertising; promotional materials and event signage; videos and animations; packaging and collateral, etc.



## Let the logotype breathe

### Clear space

We respect the logotype by giving it some space. The minimum clear space that must surround the logotype is equivalent to the height of its capital M.

### Minimum size

In print, the logo should never appear smaller than 0.7" (18 mm). On-screen, it must appear at least 44 pixels wide.

### Clear space



### Minimum size

Microsoft

On screen: 44 px  
Print: 0.7" (18 mm)

## The logotype is colorful

The Microsoft logotype is available in the core brand colors and dark tints, as well as Cool Gray 9, black and white. The selected logotype color should be present elsewhere in the composition, such as in the lead brand logo, an illustration, or a headline.

Use a color logotype on white backgrounds and a white logotype on color backgrounds. To maintain sufficient contrast when the logotype is used on a photo background, use a color logotype on light images and a white logotype on dark images.

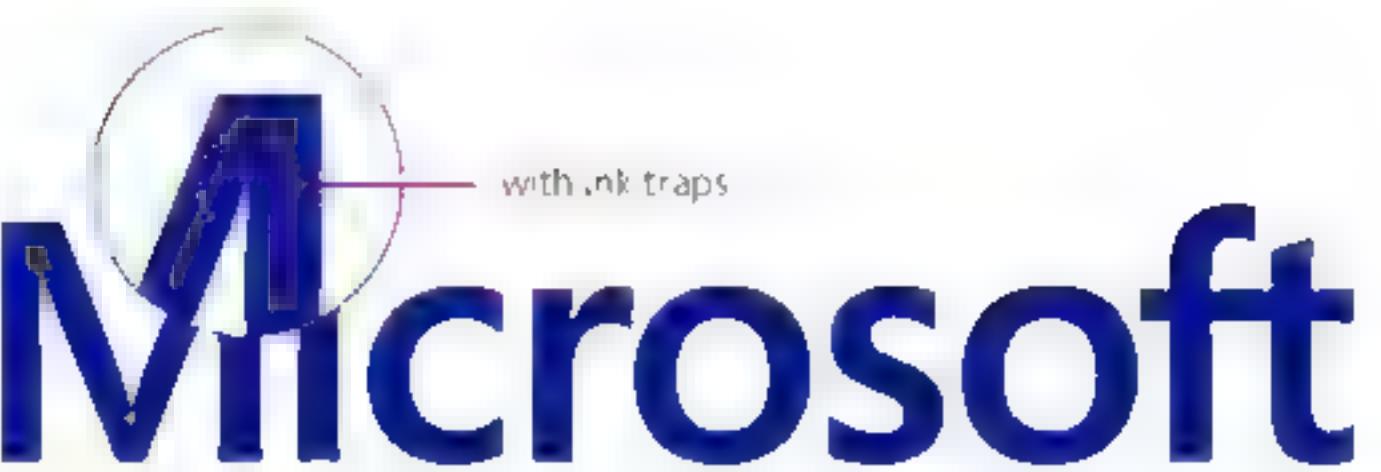
Microsoft

## Use the display version of the logotype for very large applications

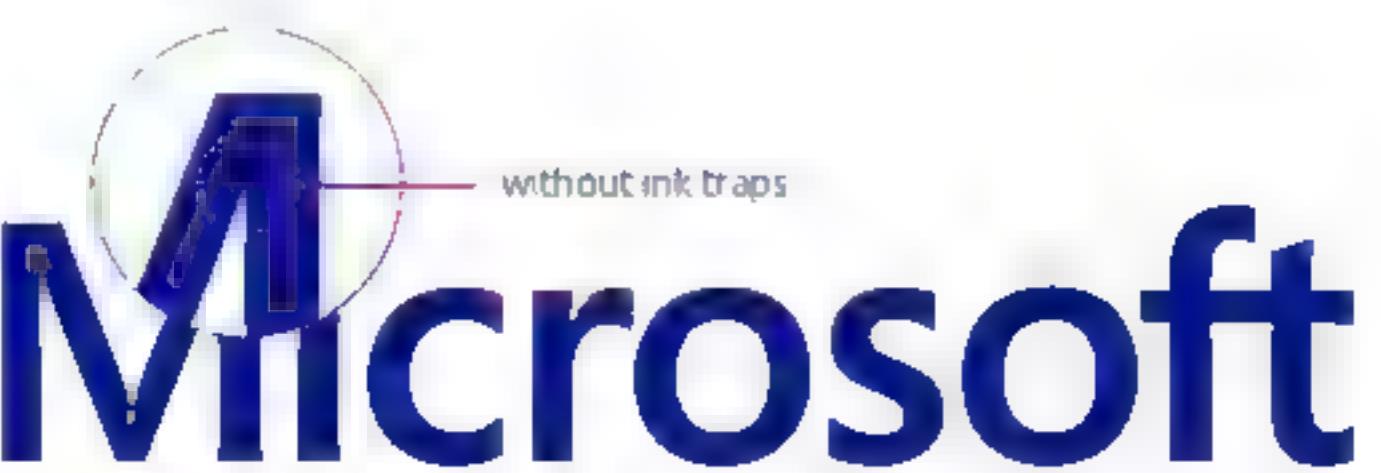
The standard version of the logotype is optimized for use at small sizes, making it the best choice for most marketing applications. Subtle adjustments have been made to the standard logotype to help it reproduce cleanly and clearly at small sizes. However, these adjustments—called ink traps—are distracting and unnecessary when the logotype is enlarged.

If the logotype will be printed at sizes larger than 1 inch tall, use the display logotype artwork. Contact [corbrand@microsoft.com](mailto:corbrand@microsoft.com) to request logo files.

Standard logotype



Display logotype



## The logotype complements the brands it endorses

This is important because both the product brand and Microsoft benefit by being used together. Therefore it is paramount that all product branded communications use the Microsoft logotype as an endorsement.

Shown here is the ideal color and scale relationship to use when placing the logotype in a layout together with another brand.

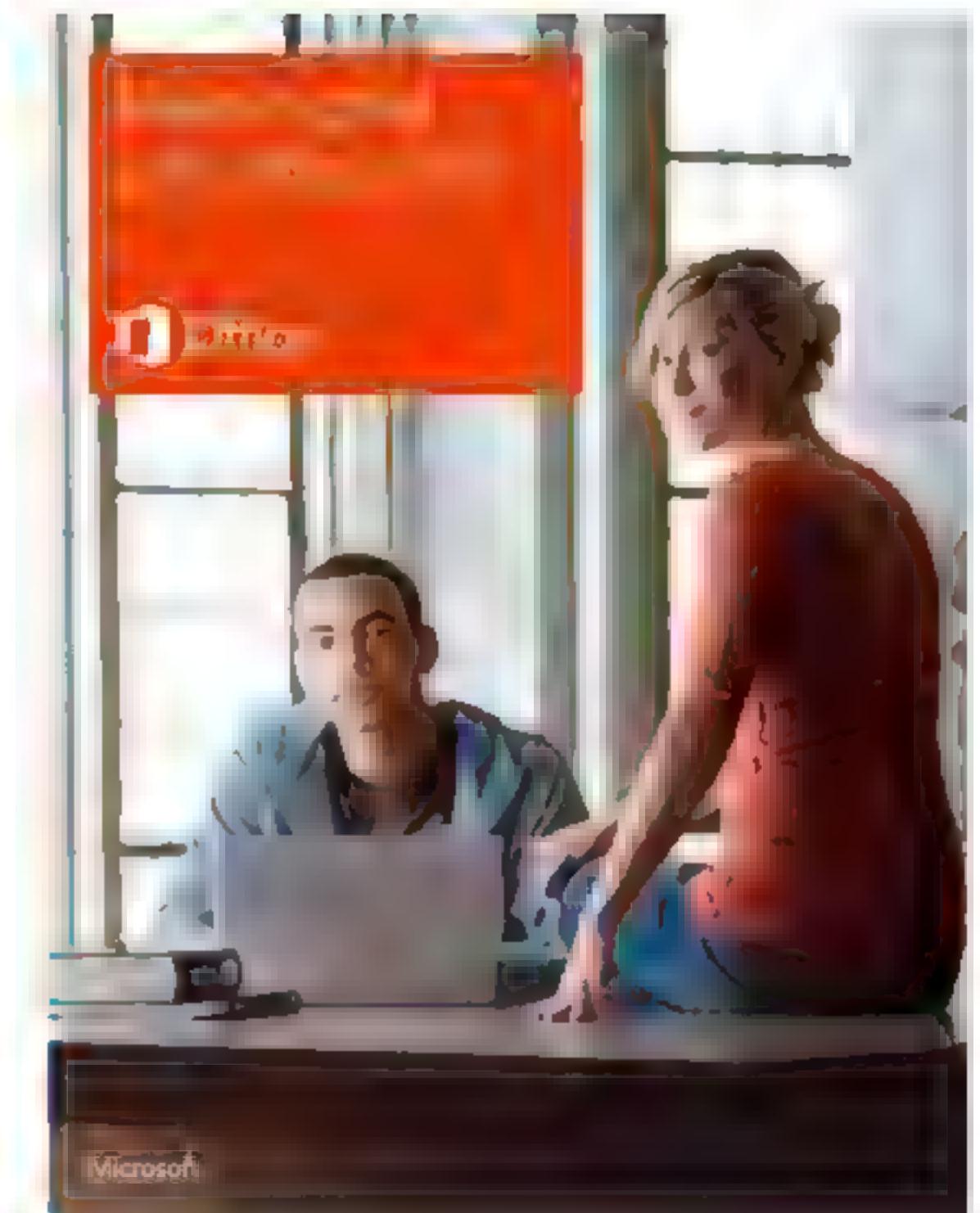
Consult the guidelines for the brand you are working with for additional details on scale and color.



## Place the logotype so it aligns with other elements in the layout

The logotype should be placed in an area at the periphery of the layout, away from the focal point of the layout. Placing the logotype in one corner of the layout is a good way to signal that it is an endorsement, rather than the lead brand. Regardless of where it is placed, use care in positioning the logotype so it aligns with the layout grid or with other graphic elements in the design.

See the guidelines for the brand you're working with for details on logo placement and alignment.

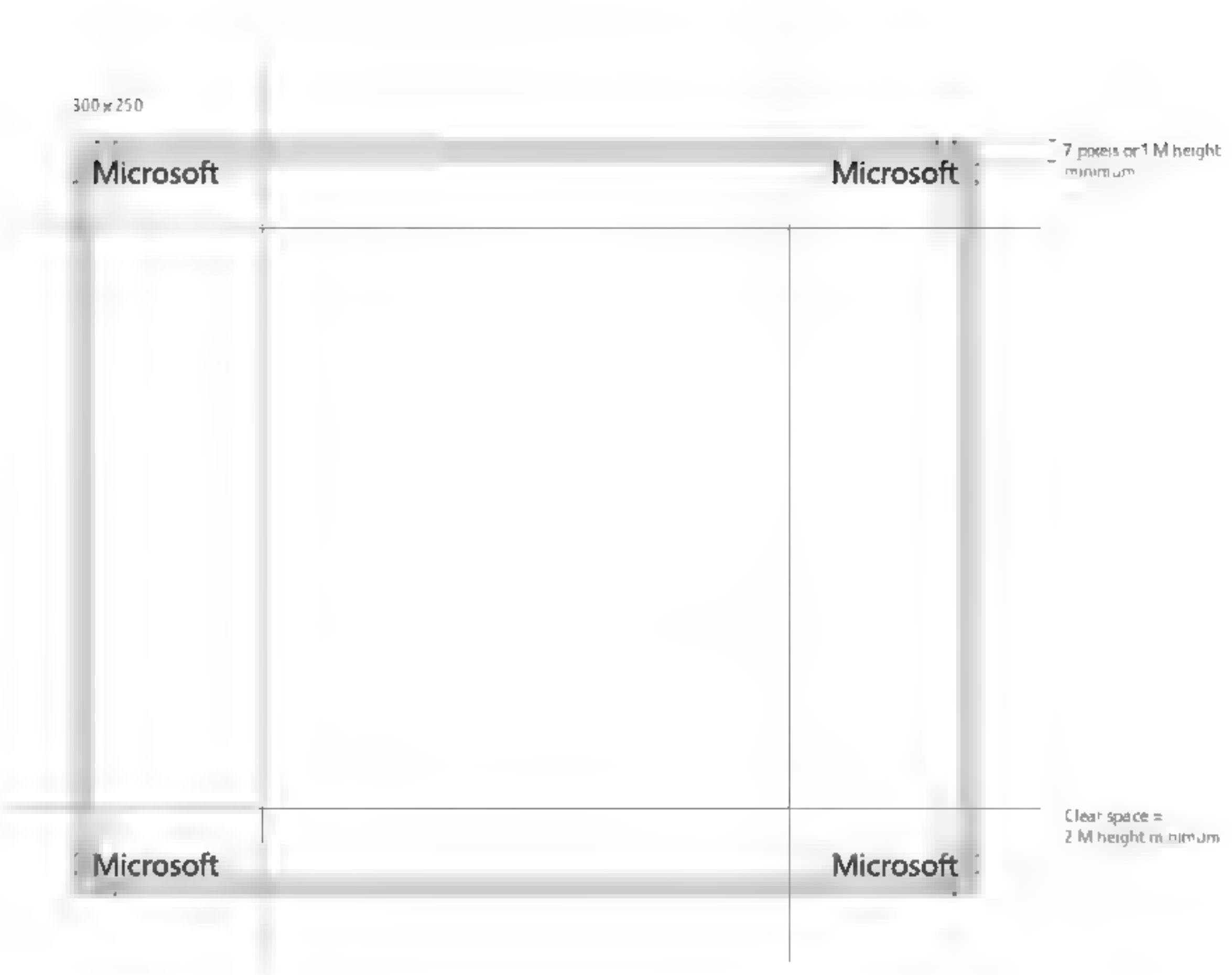


## Logotype placement in digital communications

The Microsoft logotype must appear in one of two positions for a minimum of one second in all digital communications (e.g. ads, banners, etc.)

- 1 Call-to-action end-panel (shared)
2. Alone on the end-panel

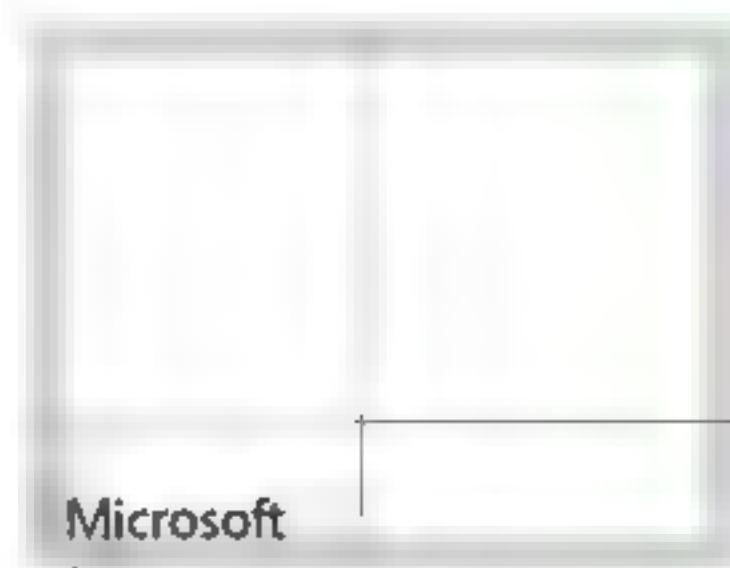
The Microsoft logotype should be placed in one of the 4 corners of the ad, equal distance from two edges in space constrained communications. Accompanying subbrand logos should be placed no closer than two (2) "M" spaces next to the logotype



## Small space banners

The Microsoft logotype must appear in all banner advertising, with a few exceptions. The Microsoft logotype may be dropped when the ad sizes are smaller than 120 x 90 and using the Microsoft logotype would prohibit appropriate subbrand sponsorship and messaging.

In the rare instance when the Microsoft logotype is not used, it must appear on the "call-to-action" (CTA) landing page.



Logo placement for 120 x 90 ad



120 x 90 ad with proper clear space



120 x 60 ad does not allow proper clear space

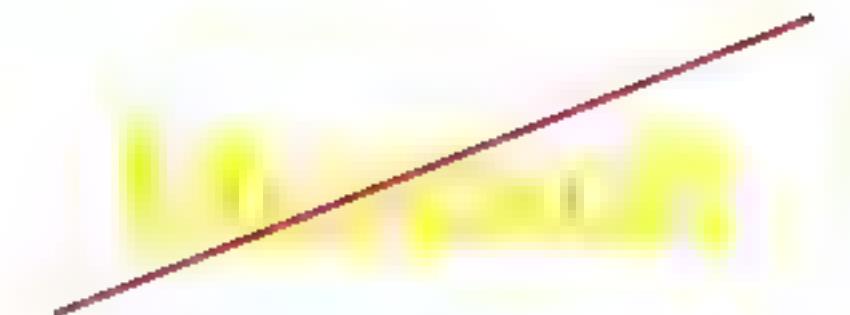
Logotype (don'ts)



Don't stretch or extend the logotype



Don't compress the logotype



Don't use light colored logotype artwork on white or light backgrounds



Don't group the logotype with other text, product names, or product logos



Don't use legacy logotype artwork on new materials



Don't place the logotype over busy backgrounds



Don't place the logotype with a cornerstone tile



Don't apply gradients, dropshadows or other effects to the logotype



Don't create the logotype by typing "Microsoft" in Segoe font. Use the provided artwork

## Type is beautiful, and it matters

Type is more than a design element; it articulates our message, expressing both what we say and how we say it. Modern, easy to read, and humanist, the Segoe type family is closely aligned with the Microsoft brand personality. We use it within products and in communications across brands.

Segoe is straightforward, allowing our messages—from the enthusiastic to the practical—to be easily understood.

- Use Segoe
- Keep it simple
- Limit type sizes to three
- Keep it flush left
- Use sentence case

# Segoe is our type family

We use Segoe, a completely custom type family created for Microsoft that has become a longstanding core element of our visual identity.

Segoe Pro is the brand font used for print and graphic executions. Segoe UI is the Windows OS font, and the font that is used for on-screen and digital executions.

To download the Segoe Pro font family, visit Medabank: <https://mediabank.partners/extranet.microsoft.com>

## Segoe Pro

Use for all print applications

### Segoe Pro Light

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S  
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 @ # \$ % & \*

### Segoe Pro Regular

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S  
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 @ # \$ % & \*

### Segoe Pro Semibold

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S  
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 @ # \$ % & \*

### Segoe Pro Bold

**A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S**  
**a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z**  
**1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 @ # \$ % & \***

## Segoe UI

Use for on-screen applications like PowerPoint, email, and websites.

### Segoe UI Light

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S  
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 @ # \$ % & \*

### Segoe UI Regular

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S  
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 @ # \$ % & \*

### Segoe UI Semibold

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S  
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 @ # \$ % & \*

### Segoe UI Bold

**A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S**  
**a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z**  
**1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 @ # \$ % & \***

**Size and weight**

- Limit type to no more than three sizes
- Use Light for large headlines
- Use Regular or Semibold for increased legibility at small sizes or over backgrounds
- Use Semibold or Bold for subheads, but not for headlines
- Segoe Black or Condensed weights should be used sparingly

**Case**

- Sentence case is our standard for all communications.
- Use all-uppercase sparingly—for titles, short headings, or subheadings, and never for full paragraphs
- Do not use all-lowercase type.

**Line spacing**

- Line spacing refers to the space between lines of type. See the chart at right for line spacing guidelines.

**Letter spacing**

- Letter spacing (also known as tracking) is the space between letters.
- Segoe is designed so that letter spacing and word spacing are set by default to 0. In some cases, spacing may need to be adjusted. Make sure that letters never touch one another. See the chart at right for tracking guidelines.

**Justification**

- Type should always be set flush left, ragged right
- Segoe should never be justified or centered.
- Avoid widows, orphans, and lines that end with hyphens

	<b>Leading</b>	<b>Tracking</b>
Body text (<8~14pt)	120% (minimum)	0
Subhead text (14~36pt)	110% (minimum)	-15
Headline text (36~72pt+)	120% (maximum)	-15

# Our international fonts align with our visual identity system

We recommend specific fonts for use around the world. If subsidiaries have identified alternate third party fonts they feel align better with Segoe please contact [corbrand@microsoft.com](mailto:corbrand@microsoft.com)

Language	Print	On Screen
Latin, Greek, Cyrillic	Segoe Pro	Segoe UI (Win 8 version)
Hebrew, Armenian, Georgian	Segoe UI (Win 8 version)	Segoe UI (Win 8 version)
Arabic	Segoe UI (Win 8 version) Majalla "Traditional"	Segoe UI (Win 8 version)
Indian languages	Nirmala UI	Nirmala UI
Thai	Leelawadee	Leelawadee
Indigenous American	Gadugi	Gadugi
China (simplified)	YaHei	YaHei UI
China (traditional)	JhengHei	JhengHei UI
Korea	Malgung Gothic	Malgung Gothic
Japan	Meiryo	Meiryo UI
Lao	Lao UI	Lao UI
Khmer	DaunPenh	Khmer UI
African languages	Ebrima	Ebrima

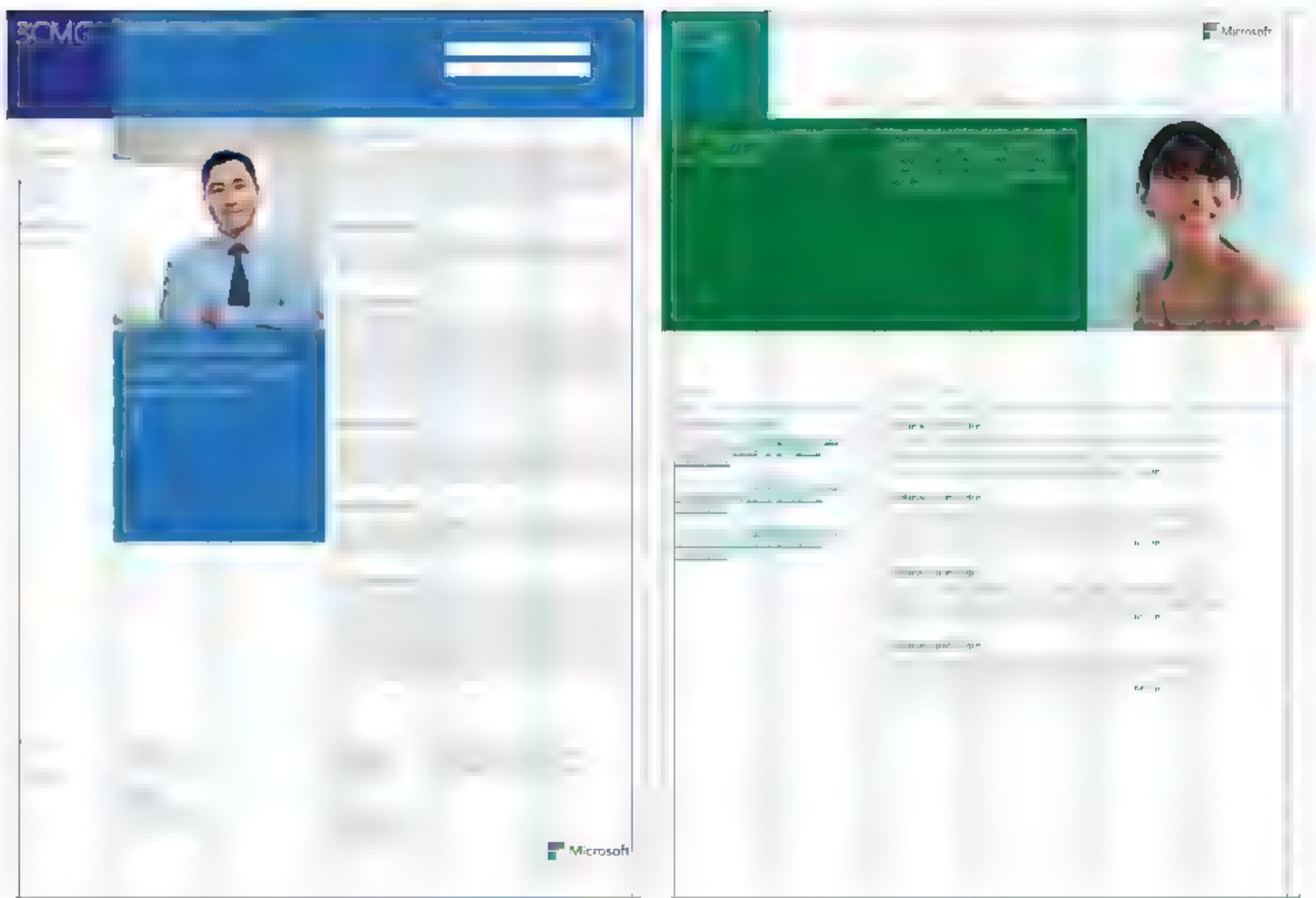
## Non-English language layouts

When designing for non-English communications, it may be necessary to mirror the layout guidance, with right-alignment replacing left-alignment.



## Keep type aligned with the grid

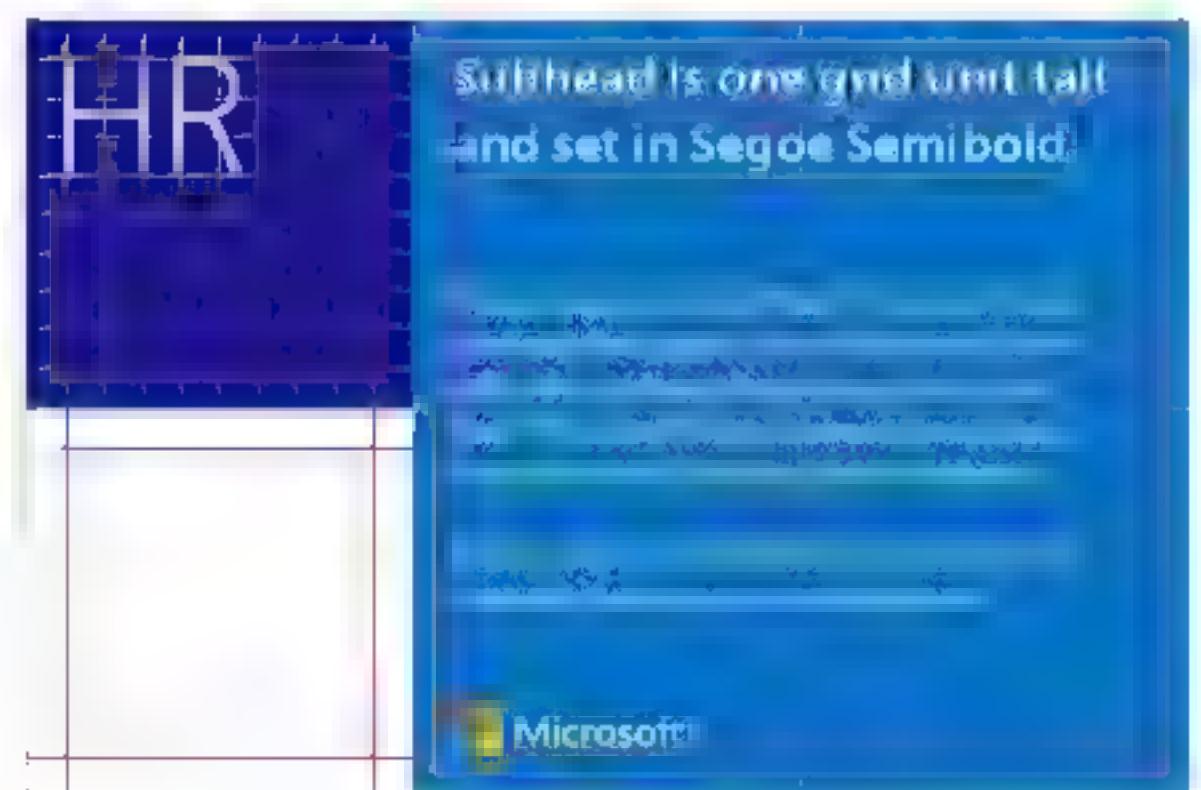
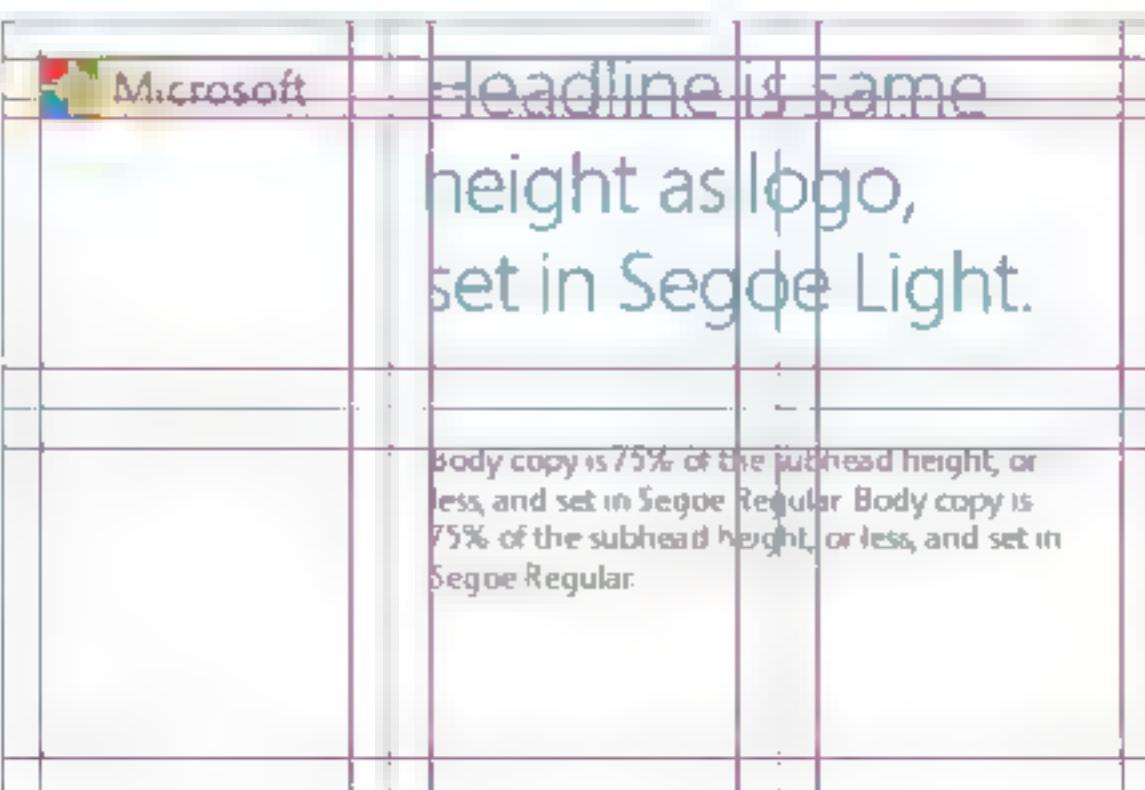
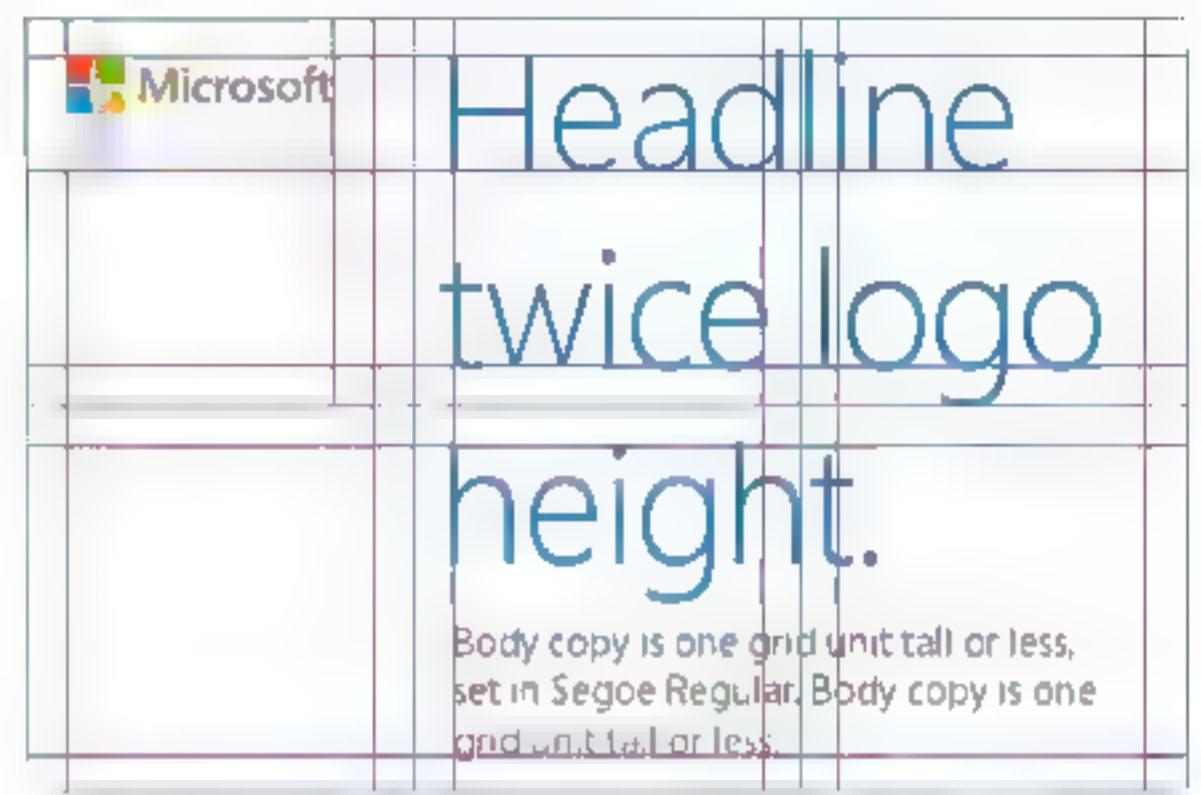
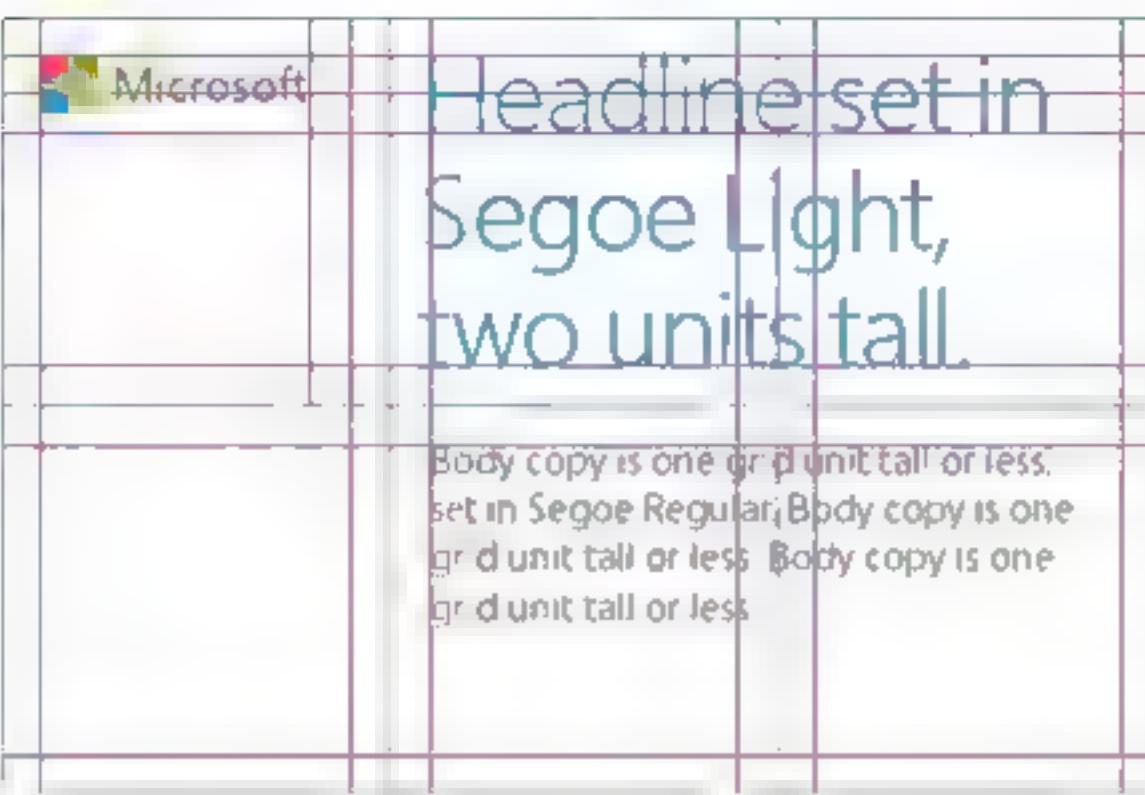
Clear, organized messages are easier for our audiences to read and respond to. Align all type, regardless of messaging category or whether it appears inside a container block, to the same grid.



Internal SharePoints (exhibits for layout only)

## Type size and relationships

While there are many possibilities in the size and style of type, here are some proven relationships for using Segoe in composition.



## Typography (don'ts)

This is Segoe Regular with a shadow.

Don't add drop shadows to type

This text is kerned at negative 100.

Don't kern text too tightly or loosely

The line spacing on this text is 200%.

Avoid loose line spacing measures.

Don't leave widows in text.

Avoid widows (words by themselves on a line) shorter than 7 characters

This text is right aligned.

Avoid right-aligned type

Too Many  
**TYPE styles**  
in one layout

Don't use more than 1 or 2 type styles in close proximity, and try to follow the rule of 3 type sizes per page layout.

This headline is hyphenated.

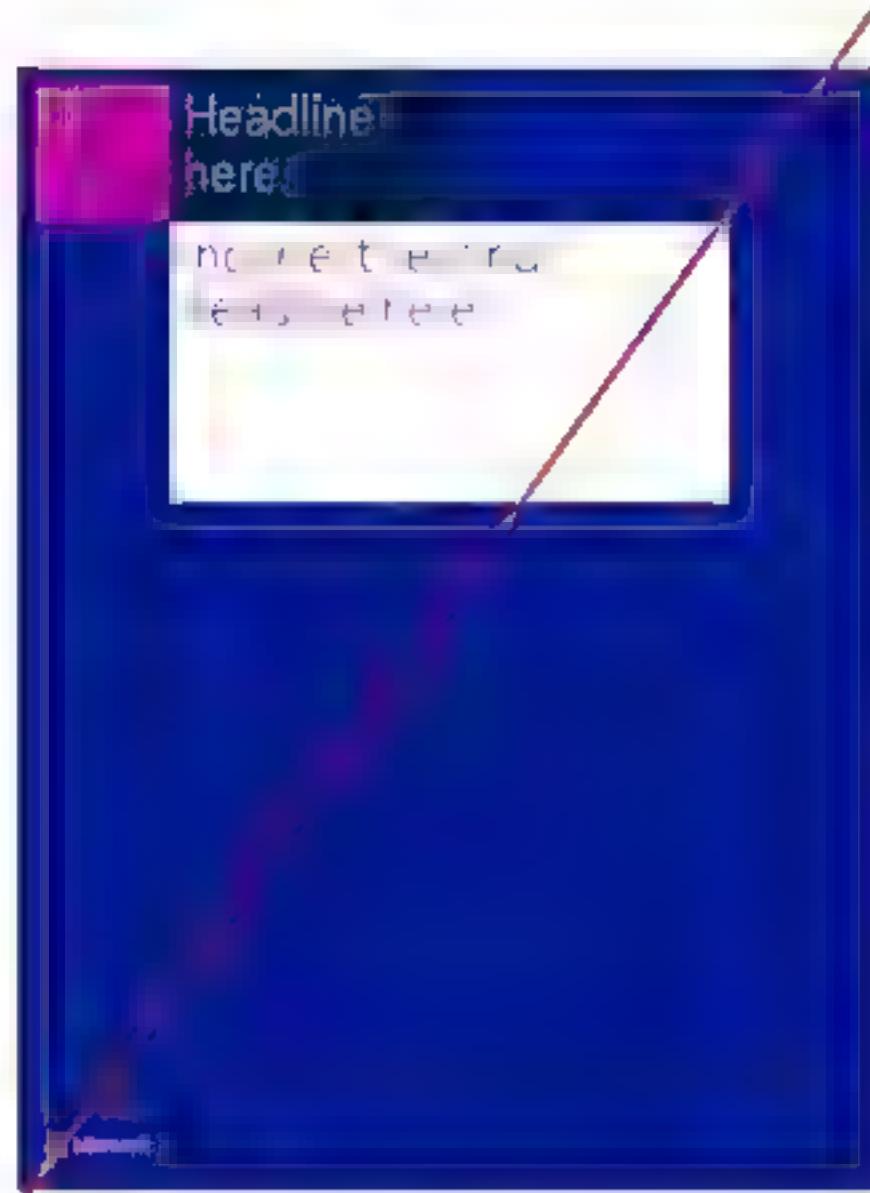
Avoid hyphenation in general, and especially in headlines.

This type is stretched.

Don't stretch type horizontally or vertically

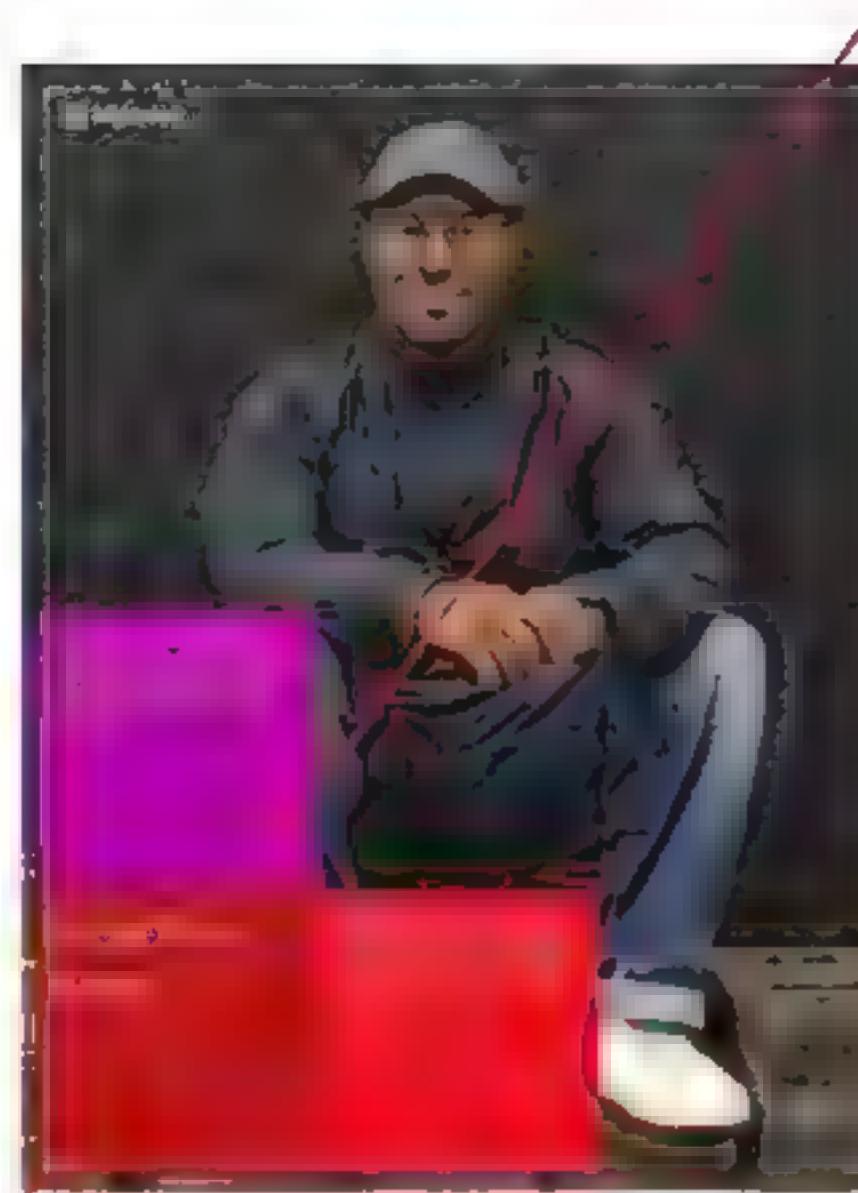
This two-column layout leaves an orphan.

Don't leave orphans in your text. (An orphan is a lone word at the top of a page or column—the last word in a sentence carried over from the prior text block.)



Internal communication

Don't use more than one headline per layout.  
Always maintain a clear hierarchy when there's  
more than one level of information.



External communication

Don't place body copy in more than one tile.  
Body copy within a single tile may be arranged  
into multiple columns.



Internal communication

Don't set type too large within a tile. Generally,  
headline text no larger than 75% of the tile width  
will provide the best results.

## We are colorful

Life happens in color. Color captures passions, inspires emotions, and connects people. Bright and energetic, pure and beautiful, the Microsoft colors add vibrancy to communications and are among the most recognizable and unifying elements in our visual identity.

Choose one of the 10 core colors (the layered ring in the color wheel shown here) as the primary color in your layout. The lighter and darker tints may be used as highlights and accents.



## Color

# Use the 10 core colors in the right places

Use RGB and HEX formulas for on-screen and digital use. CMYK builds and PMS colors are for print applications.

Please note that each color has been optimized for on-screen (RGB), or print (solid or 4CP) reproduction. The specific RGB color formula, PMS color, and CMYK color formula are provided here and must be specified individually for each color. Do not use the automated color conversion tools in your software.



# Our 10 core colors have lighter and darker tints

Layouts should utilize the 10 core colors most frequently. Our secondary palettes of lighter and darker tints provide a wide range of supporting colors.

White, gray, and black are additional supporting colors, used for copy. White may also be used as a background color.

These colors have been optimized for on-screen (RGB or HEX) or print (PMS or CMYK) use. Use the color specifications provided here. Do not use the automated color conversion tools in your software.

## Color



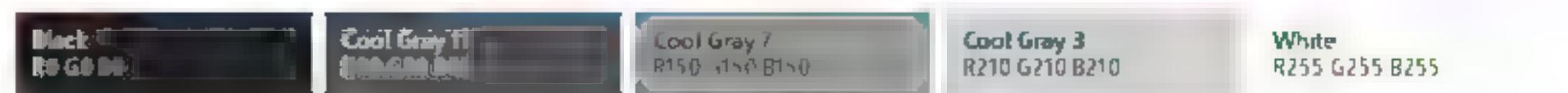
# Our colors are accessible

The appropriate use of color helps make sure all of our customers can access and understand Microsoft communications, regardless of their abilities.

Avoid relying on color alone to convey information. Always provide text or other graphical cues to guide customers to our message.

Note: Type reversed to white, or black type over a colored background, should exceed the minimum 4.5:1 contrast ratio for accessibility. Examples at right demonstrate correct color use for on-screen (RGB) applications.

## Color



# Powerful color combinations

These sample analogous color groups demonstrate the use of color pairings derived from relationships in the Microsoft color wheel. Pick a minimum of one and a maximum of four colors from your chosen group per application (not including white, gray, and black). It's recommended that you choose no more than one light tint per application to maintain vibrancy.

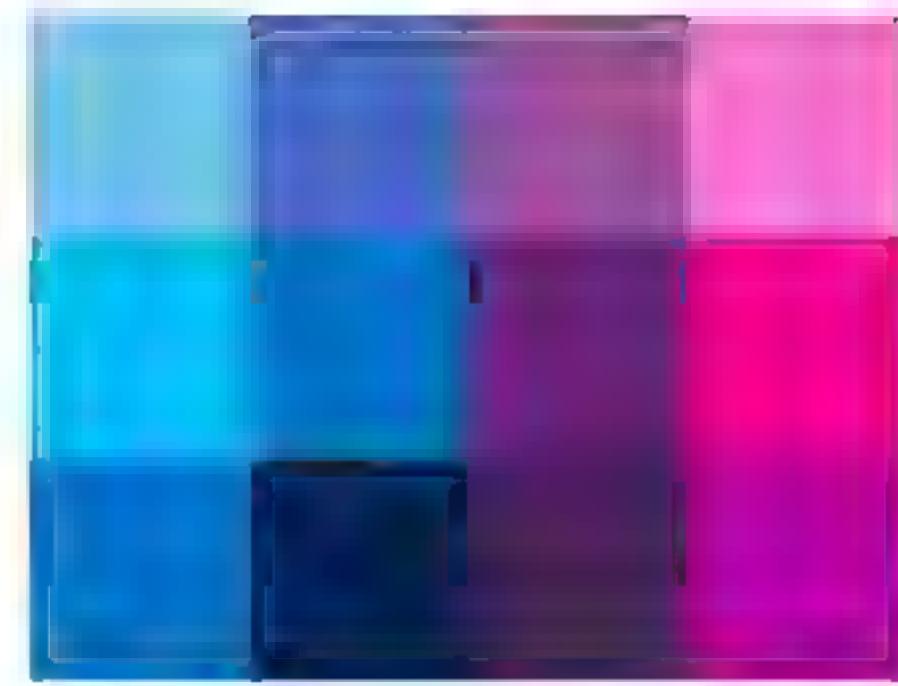


Group 1

Light tints

Core

Dark tints

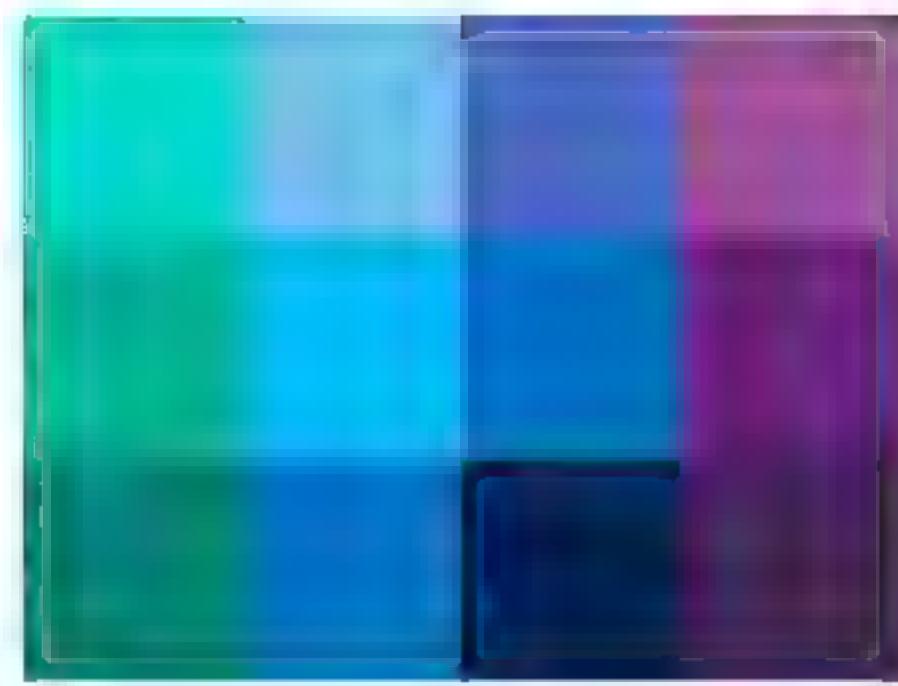


Group 2

Light tints

Core

Dark tints

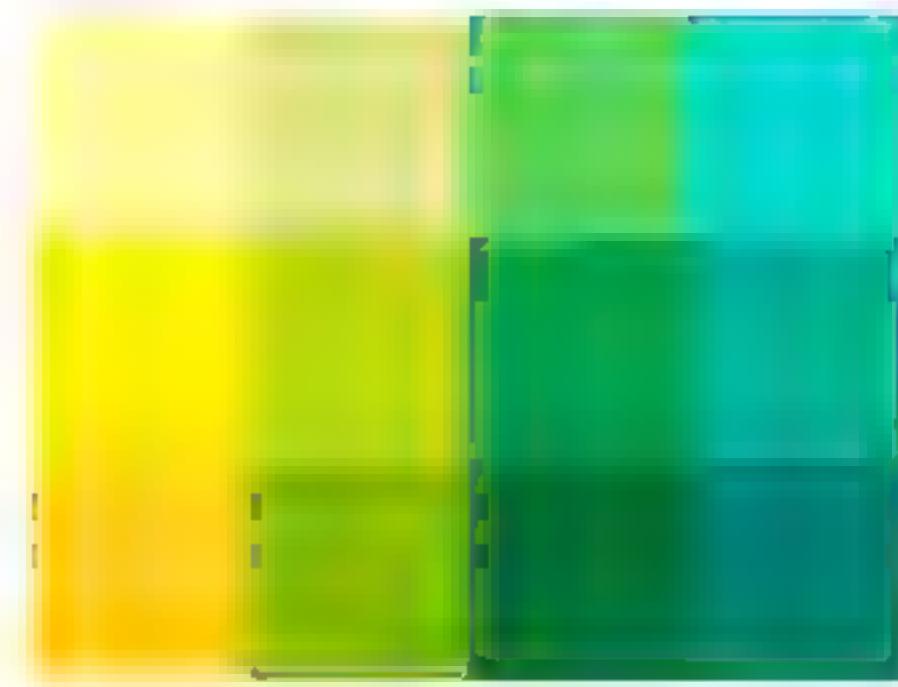


Group 3

Light tints

Core

Dark tints

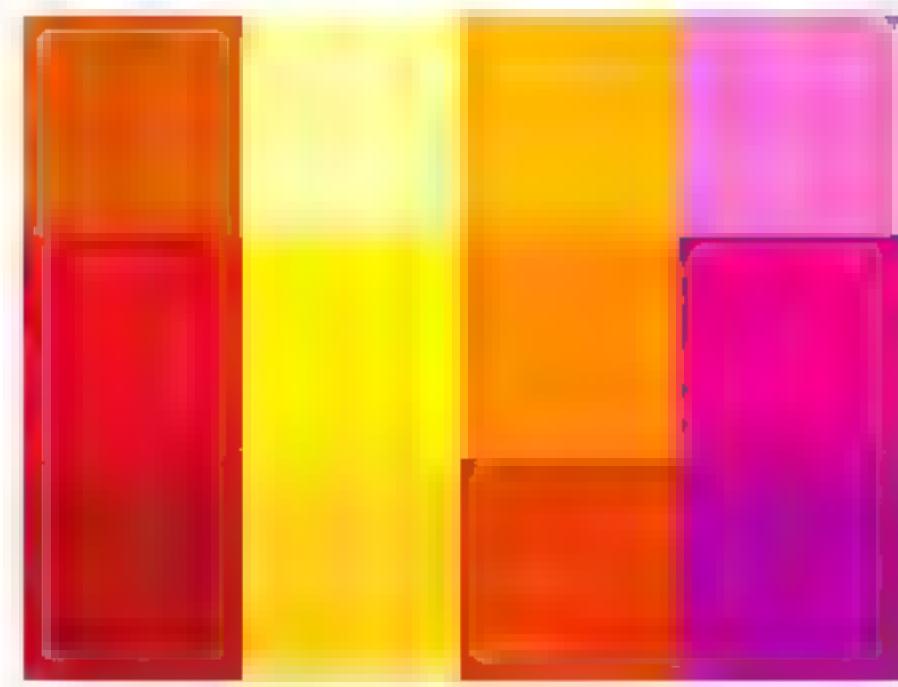


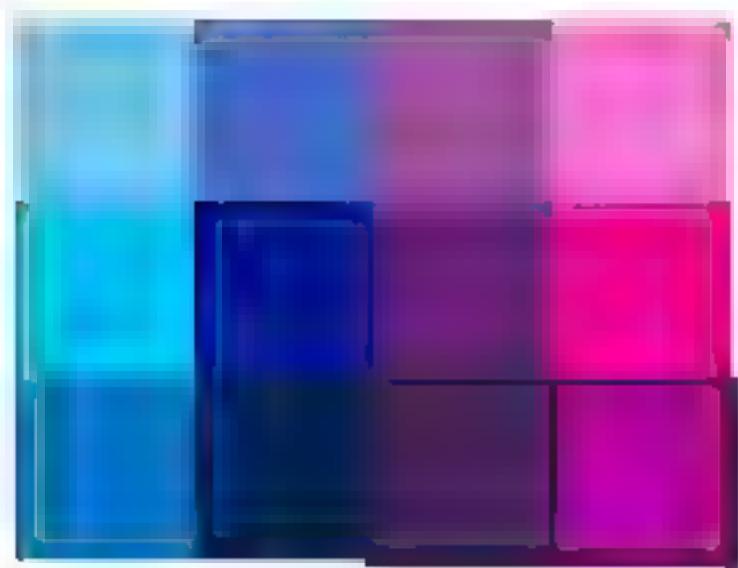
Group 4

Light Tints

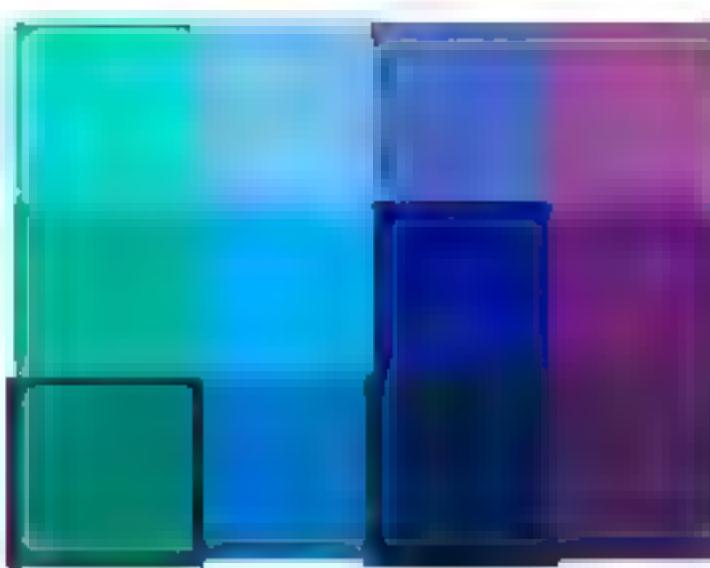
Core

Dark tints

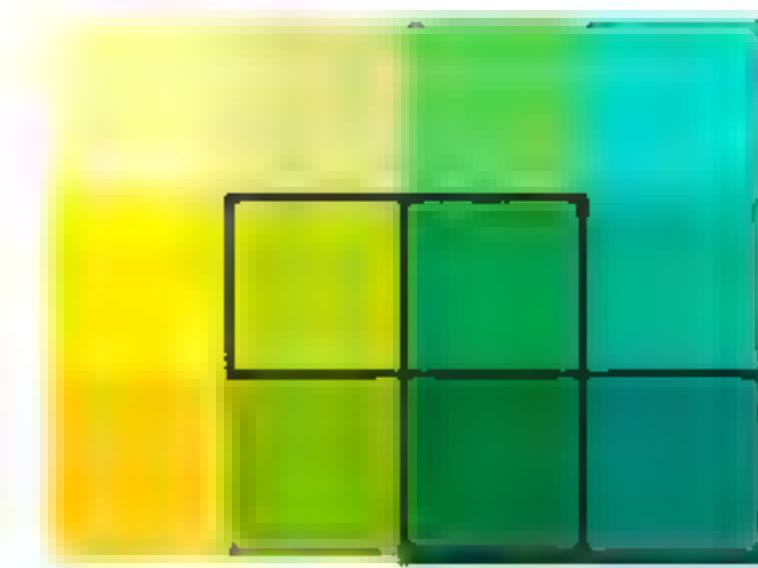




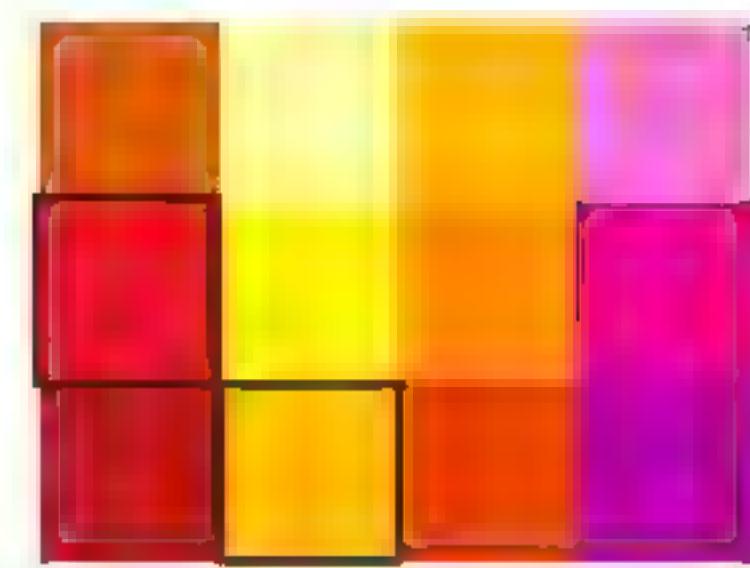
Colored type can be used against a white background as long as the color is represented somewhere else in the composition



You can use as few as one or two colors from the group



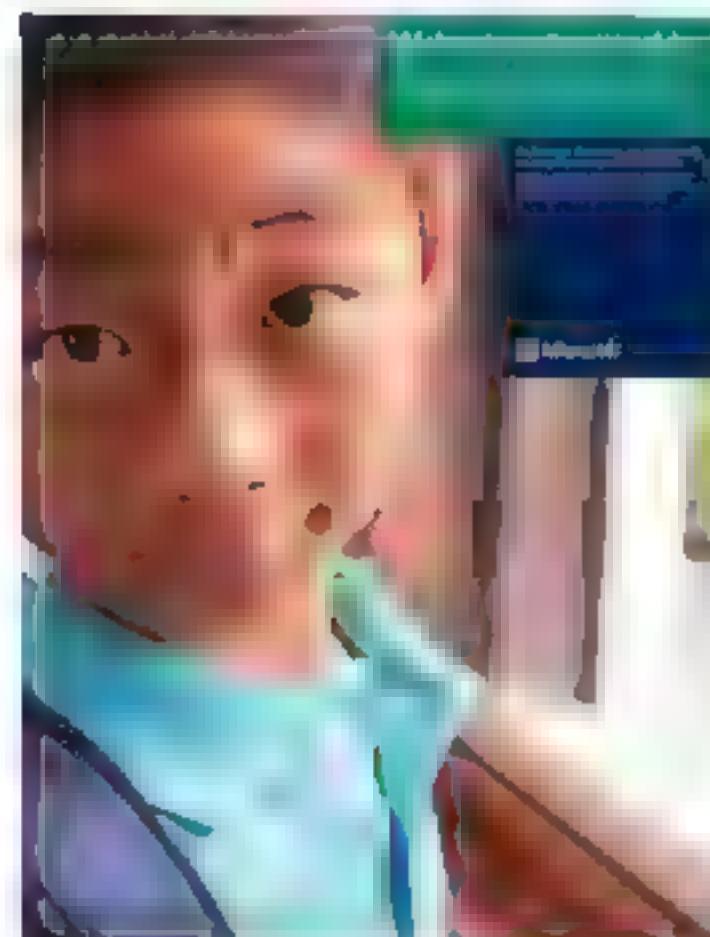
Multiple colors from the dark or mid-range zones can be used in one composition



Black or gray type can be used on white or light colored backgrounds



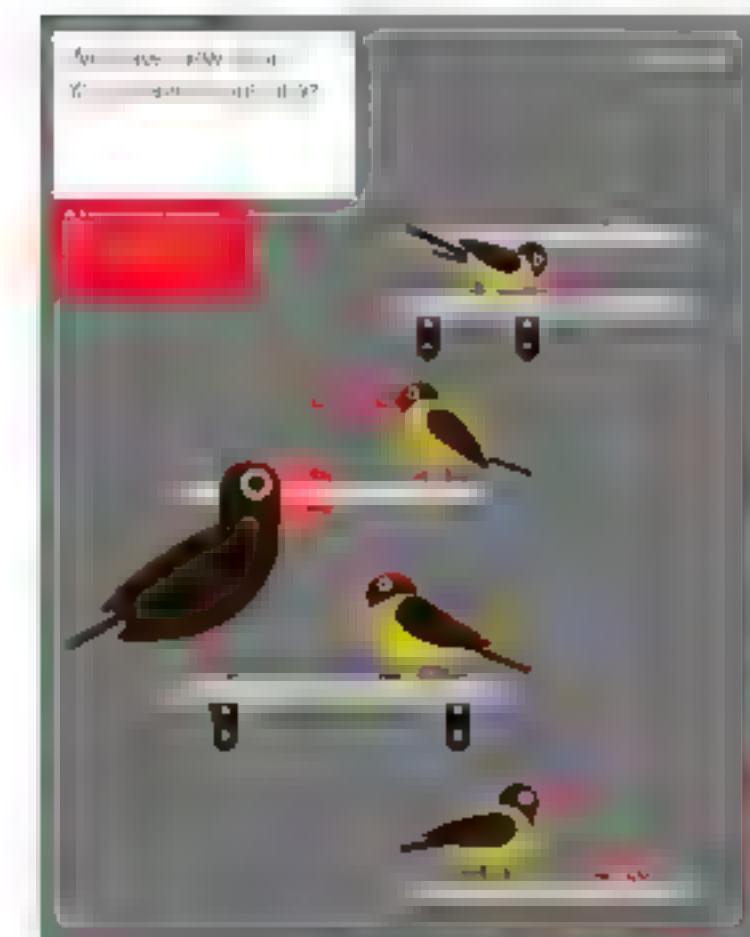
External communication



External communication

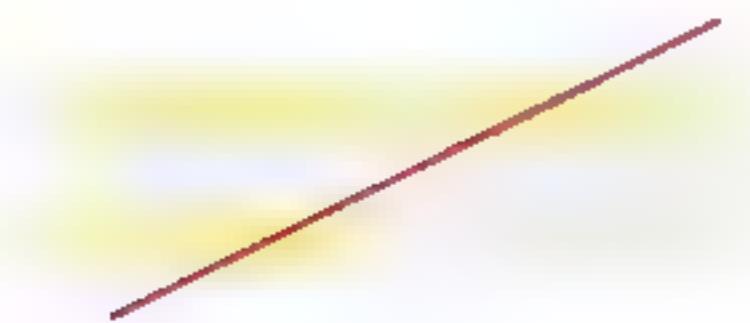


Internal communication

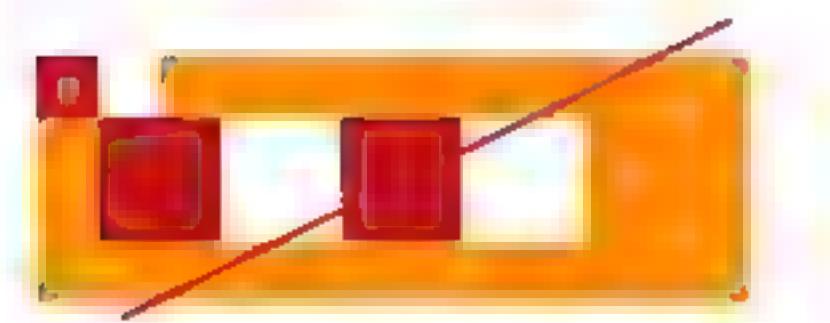


External communication

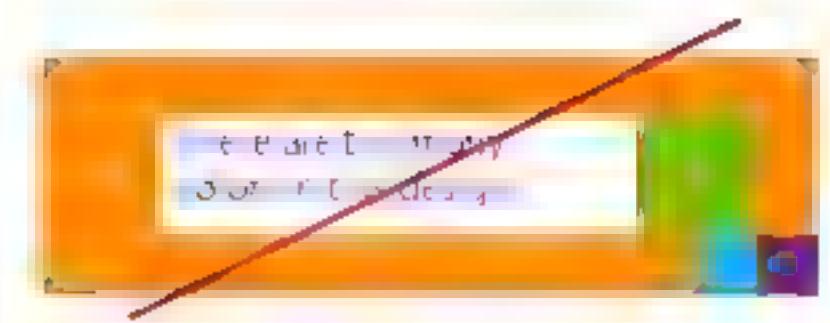
## Color (don'ts)



Avoid low-contrast color combinations.



Don't repeat colors in ways that create a "checkerboard" effect.



Avoid using more than three colors in a tile layout.

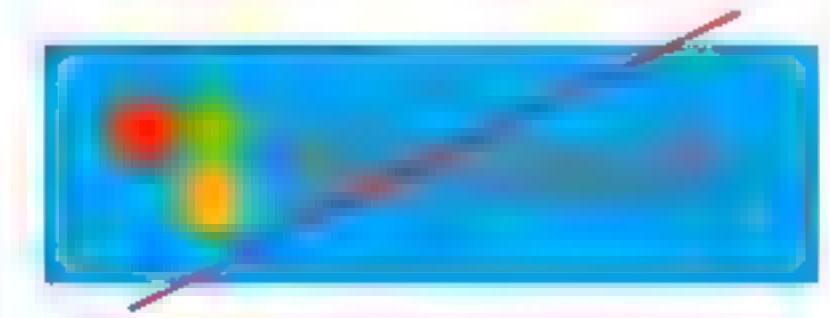
## Too many colors in one text area

Don't use more than two colors in a single text grouping.



This is a 20% tint of Red 185

Don't tint the brand colors. Choose a color from the secondary palette—or white, black, or gray—if the core colors aren't sufficient.



Don't place the logo over any color or background that provides insufficient contrast.

## Grids: invisible but critical

Even when you can't see it, the grid is the most important organizational tool in the visual identity. It's what every layout is built on. It helps deliver our messages in a clean, simple, and direct way. It makes our communications feel like they come from Microsoft. Starting with a well-defined grid will give your design a solid foundation.

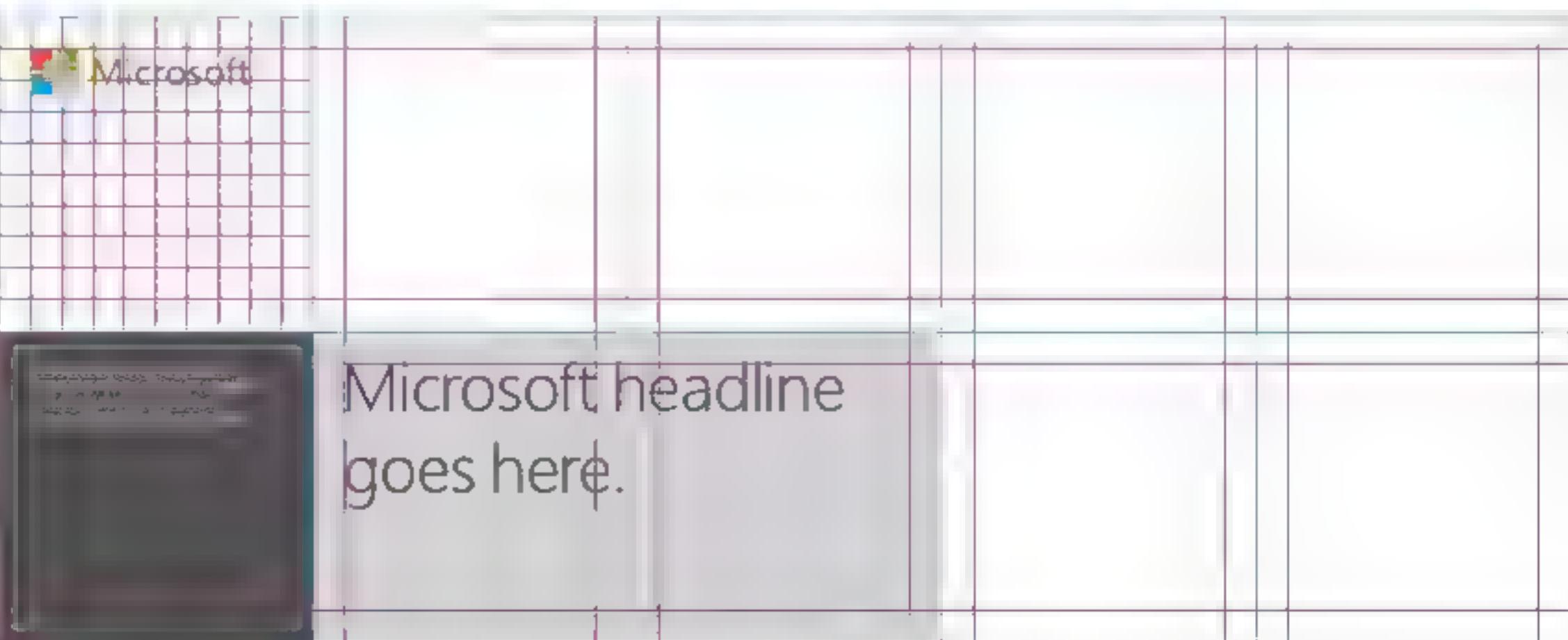
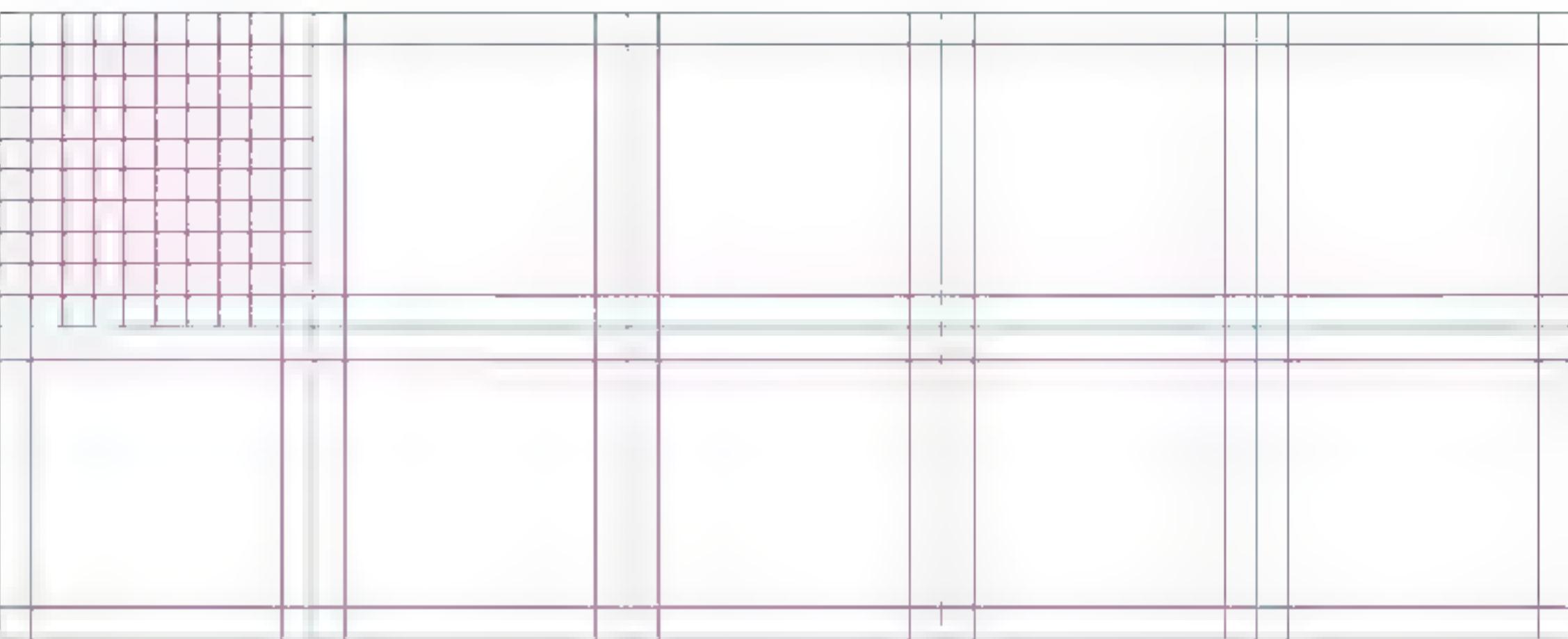
The underlying grid brings structure to simplicity. It creates the spaces where we tell our stories.

## Grids provide organization, with or without tiles

The underlying structure of all Microsoft design, grids help balance your layout, creating the spacing and information organization that will guide customers to the most important visual elements and messages.

Blue lines = grid columns and rows

Magenta lines = margins within the grid



## Tiles: a defining design element

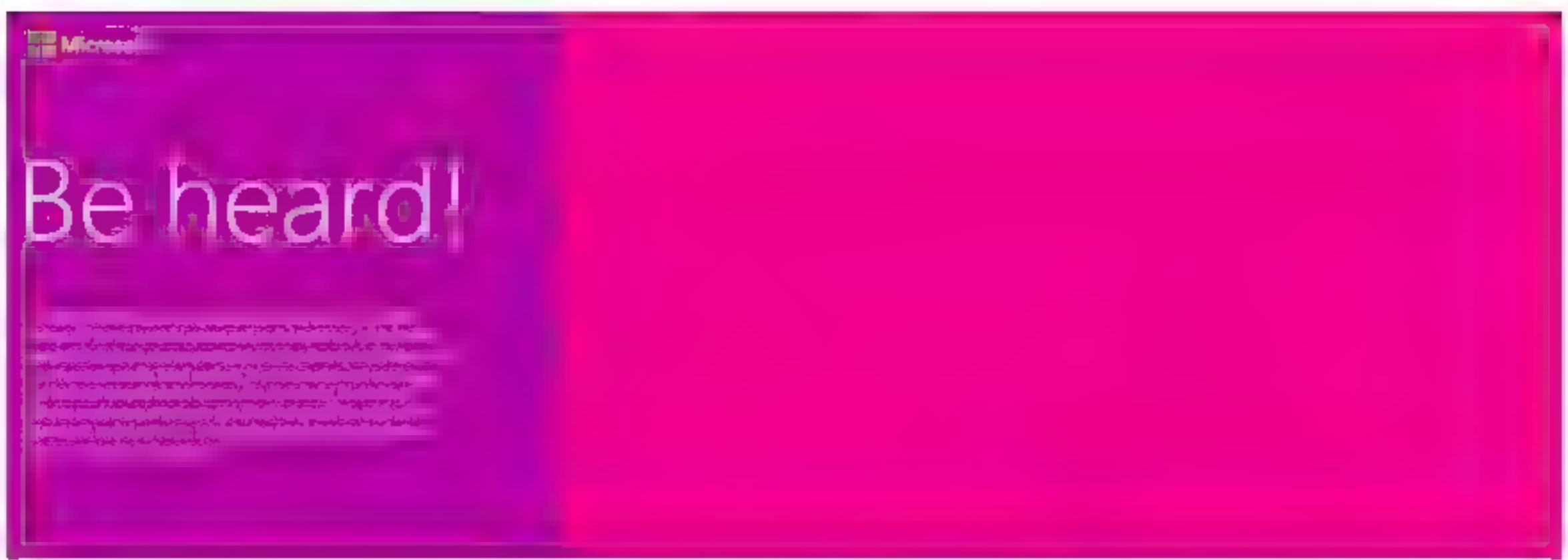
A new part of the Microsoft visual identity system and a connection to our product experience, tiles bring a fresh, captivating element to layouts, and are our primary vehicle for sending messages with type or identifying the author of internal communications.

Tiles provide a colorful starting point for a conversation. They contain important wayfinding information letting the reader know who's talking.

## What is a content tile?

Content tiles provide an opportunity for interesting and bold color combinations, and create strong areas in which to place type.

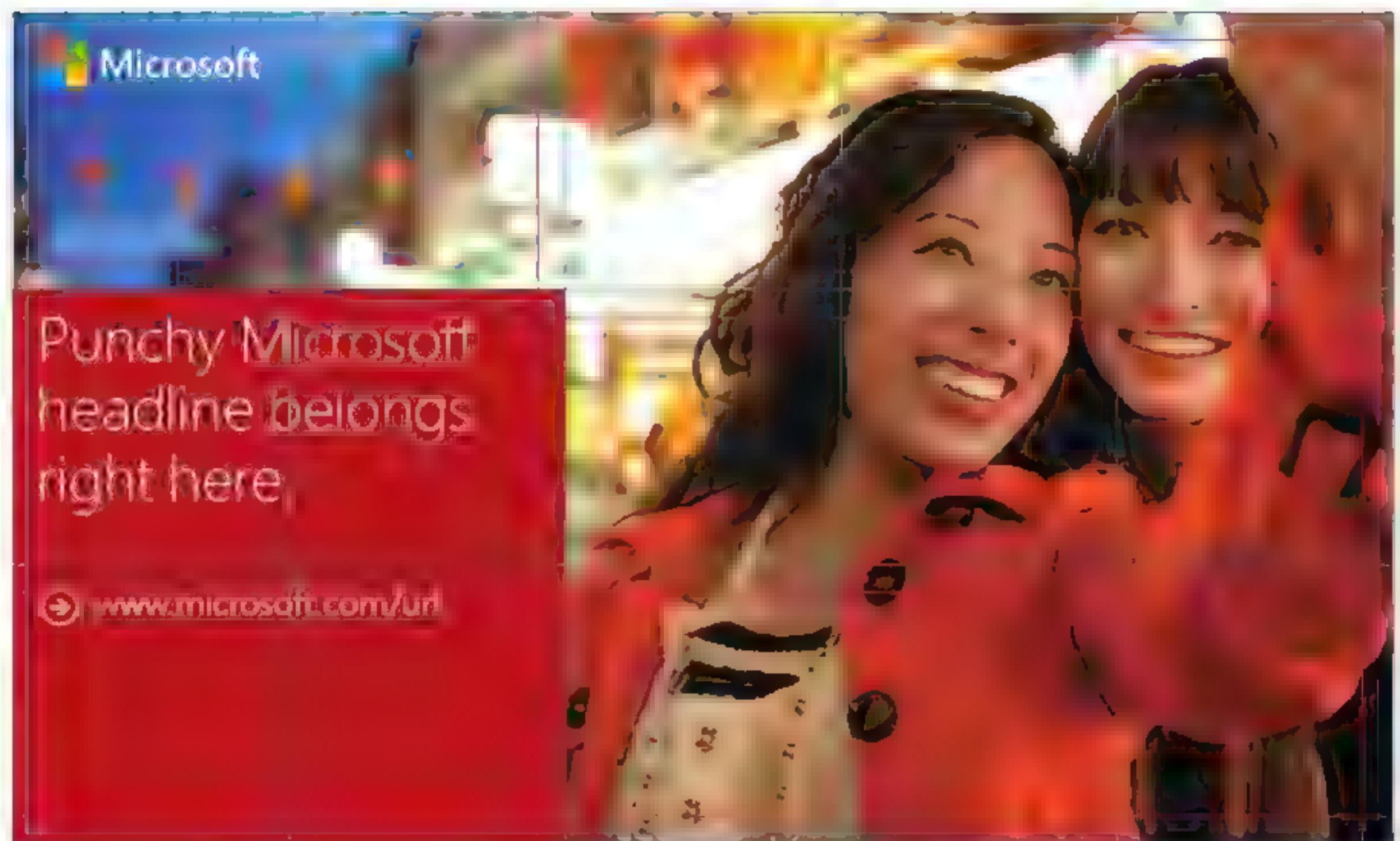
A content tile may contain the primary communication information—headline, subhead, body copy and call to action. It may also identify who the communication is from, contain illustration, photography, and color.



Internal e-mail banners

## Content tiles align to the layout grid

Content tiles align to the layout grid (shown as blue lines in this example) in at least one dimension (height or width). It is preferable that they align to both.



External communication

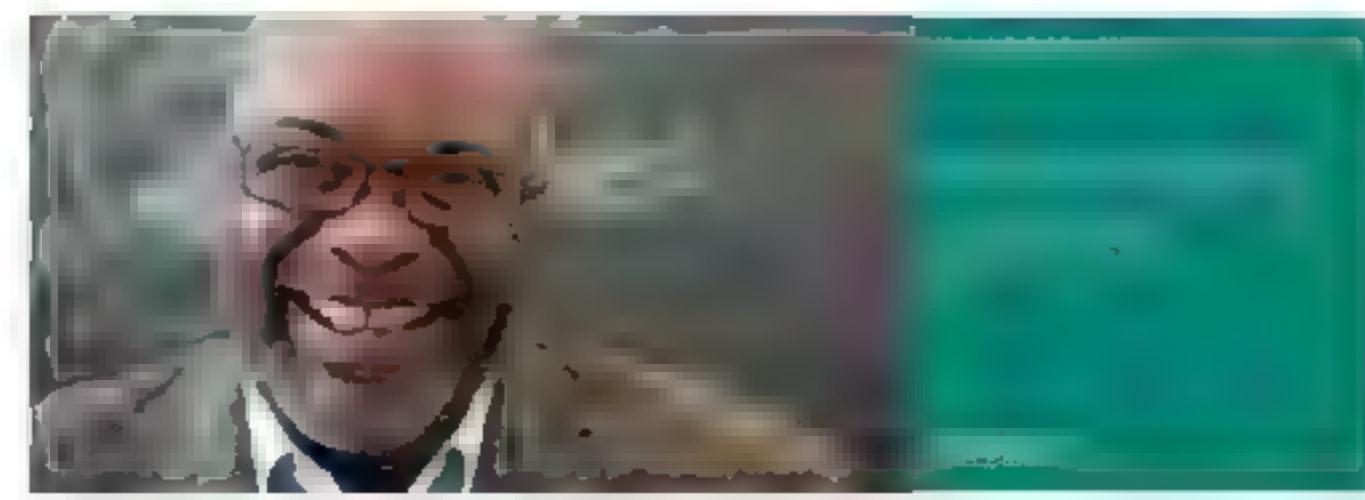
## Placing the logo inside a content tile

It is not necessary to place the logo within a tile. Content tiles must be at least two tiles wide if they will contain the logo.



External communication

Content tile must be at least two tiles wide if it will contain the logo



Internal banner

## Placing the logo outside a tile

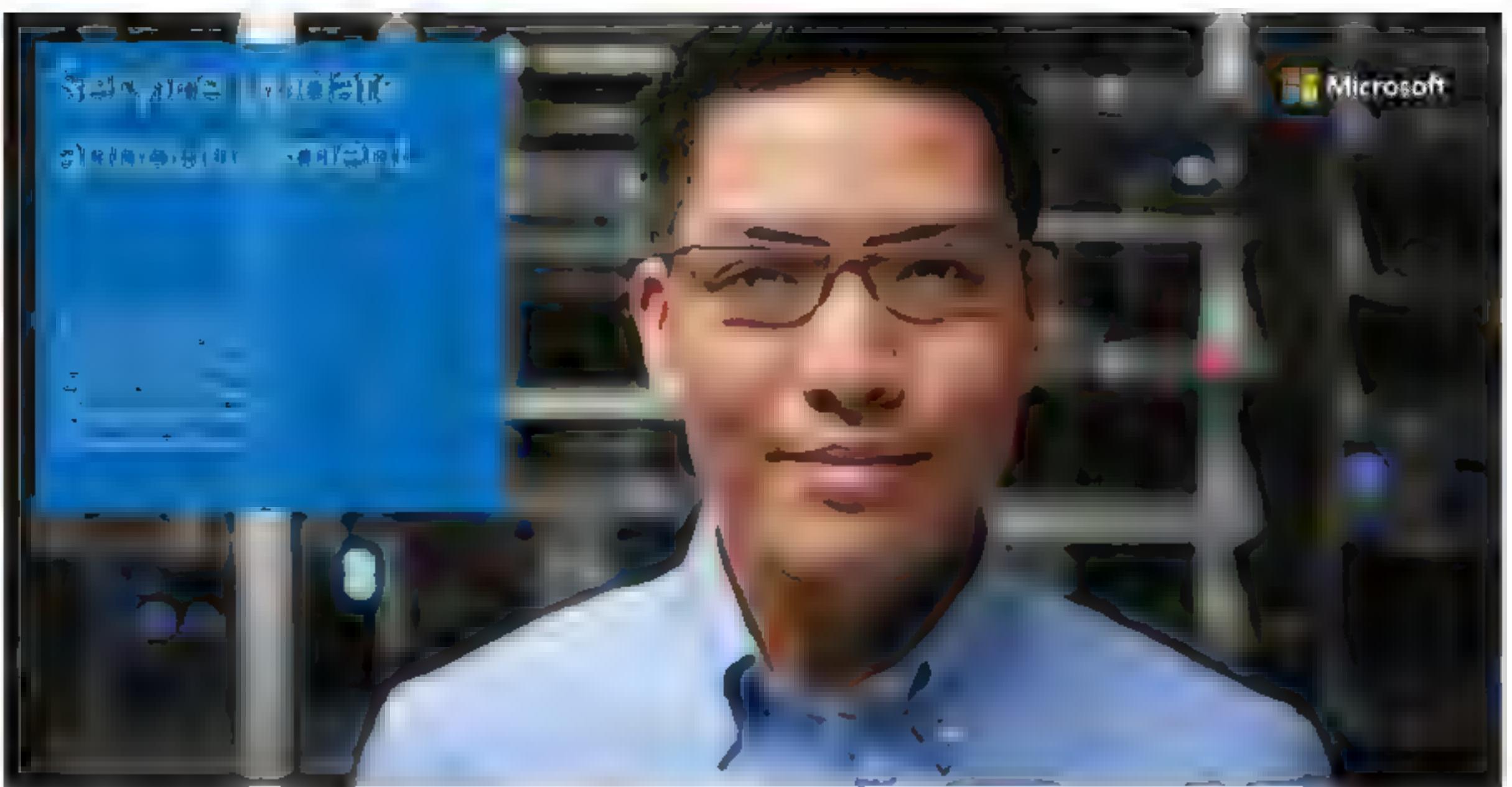
If you choose to use tiles in your layout but wish to place the Microsoft logo outside of the tile, be sure it aligns to the grid, and try to align it with other typographic elements in the layout. This sample flies the composition.



External publication spread

## Using transparency when content tiles interact with photos

While cornerstone tiles must always be 100% opaque, content tiles may be set to a variety of transparency levels when applied over imagery. Colors will react differently in combination with different photos, but transparency levels should generally fall between 80 and 100 percent opaque. The goal is to maintain the color's vibrancy while creating a softening effect as it interacts with the image.



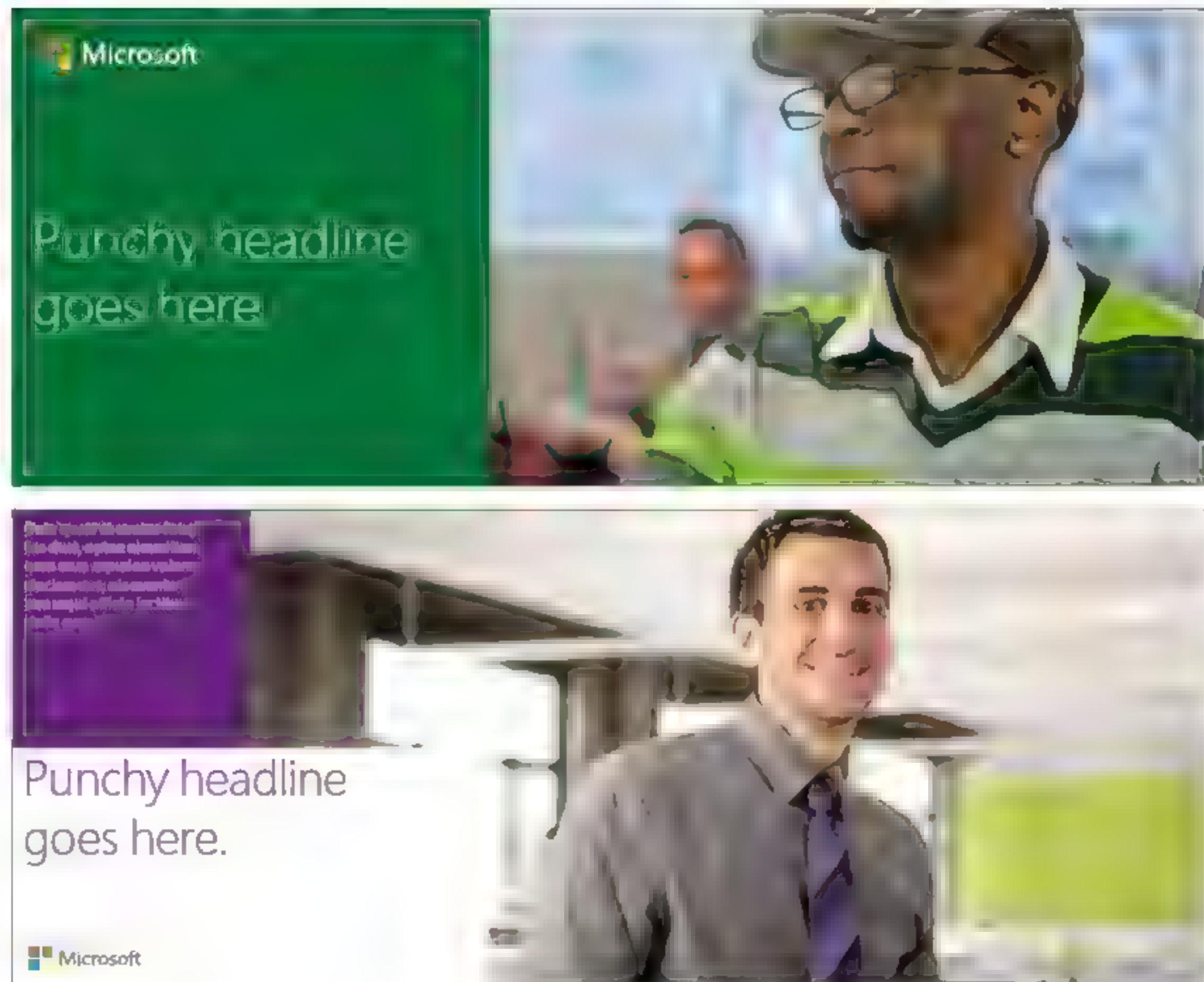
Content banner

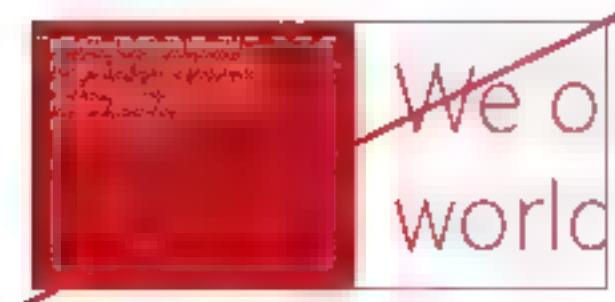
## The fewer tiles the better

Tiles establish a consistent visual language across all Microsoft brand communications. Tiles form natural structures for placing type, especially on photographic backgrounds, giving us an opportunity to start meaningful conversations with customers.

As useful and memorable as tiles can be, overusing them can dilute their impact and crowd your layout.

Limit the number of tiles to as few as possible. A good rule of thumb is to incorporate two tiles, including the cornerstone tile, if applicable. Add a third tile only if needed.

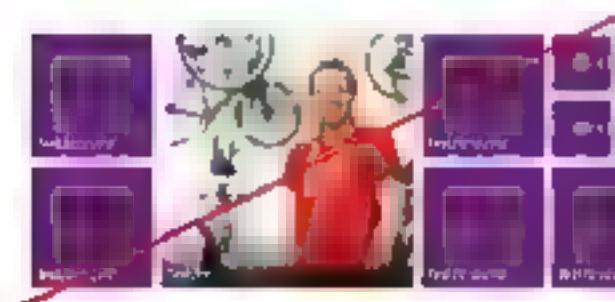




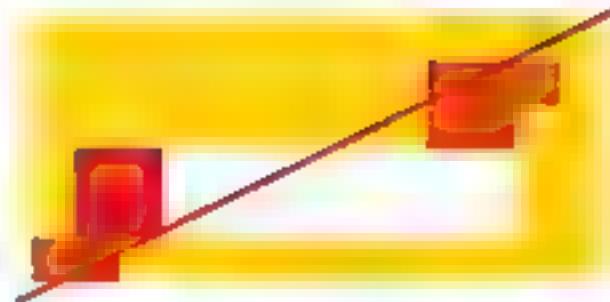
Don't use different internal margins for different elements within a layout. Using consistent margins allows all text and logo elements to align.



Don't align type to the tile grid. It should align to the interior margins.



Don't separate tiles with gaps or margins in marketing collateral. This is a product user interface design scheme, not intended for communications.



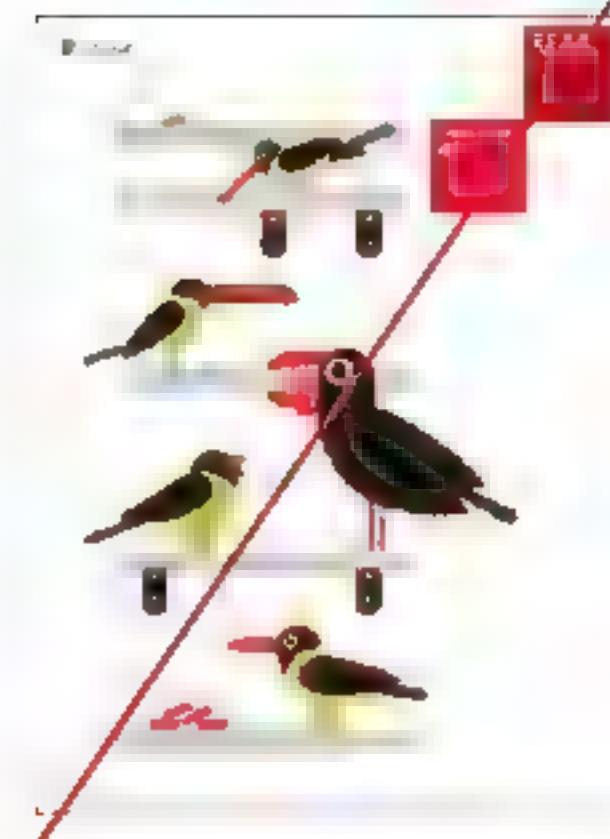
Avoid excessive use of tiles. Use them sparingly to create maximum impact.



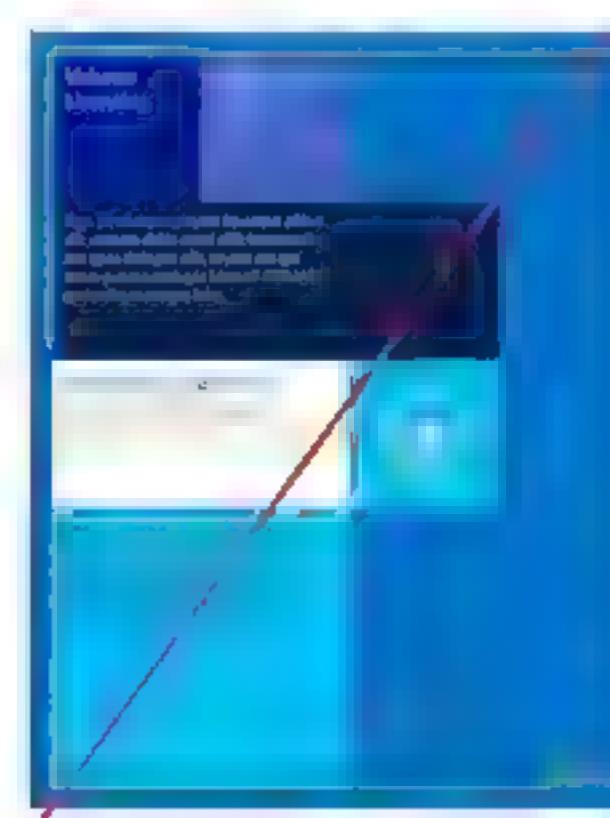
Don't create blank tiles.



Don't place the logo in a single tile. The logo may only be placed in areas two tiles or more in width.



Don't align tiles diagonally.



Don't overuse tiles.



Avoid flush shapes—create movement, not blocks.



Don't use tiles as decoration. Tiles are purposeful and must contain content.

## Identifying internal groups with a cornerstone tile

The cornerstone tile is used in internal Microsoft communications to identify the source of the content.

When used, the cornerstone tile is the first tile placed in a layout. It is placed in one corner of the layout, and all other tiles are dependent on its position and size.

Cornerstone tiles are always colorful. They are not translucent and do not appear white, gray, or black.

Even when the cornerstone tile is used, keep in mind that the Microsoft logo must also appear on all communications.

Do not create your own cornerstone tiles. To request a group cornerstone tile please contact: [corbrand@microsoft.com](mailto:corbrand@microsoft.com)



## Identifying internal groups

Not all groups within the Microsoft organization should have a cornerstone tile. The highest level divisional name belongs in the cornerstone tile.

Sub group designations may be handled elsewhere within the layout. For instance a communication from the "Diving" sub-group would use the parent group's cornerstone tile ("Re: Estate and Facilities")



Internal posters



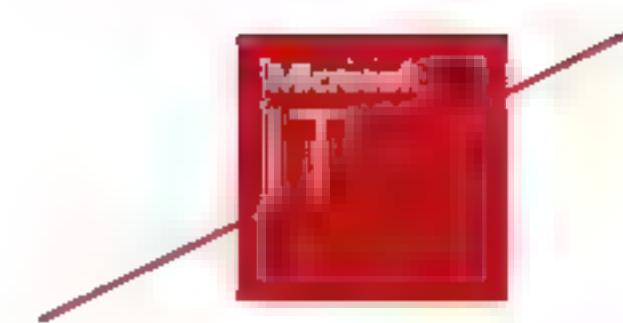
## Cornerstone tiles (don'ts)



Don't place the Microsoft logo or logotype in a cornerstone tile



Don't create group name lock-ups with the Microsoft logo or logotype



Don't create lockups of group names together with the Microsoft name, logo or logotype, either inside or outside a tile



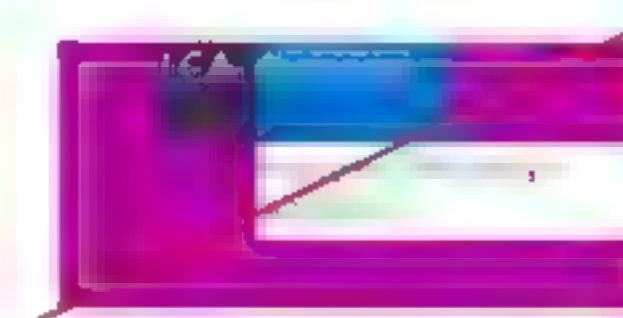
Cornerstone tiles are never black. Use provided artwork



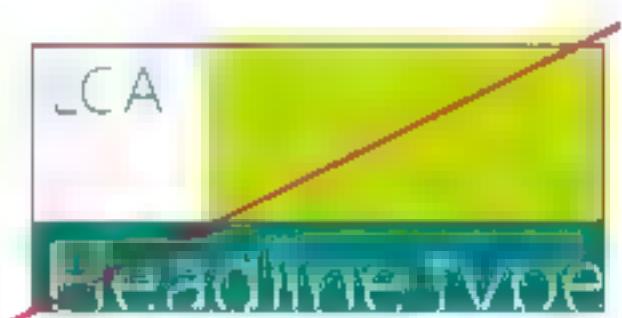
Don't create branded tile groupings or use the cornerstone tile to identify sub-groups within the organization



Don't align type to the tile grid. It should align to the interior margins.



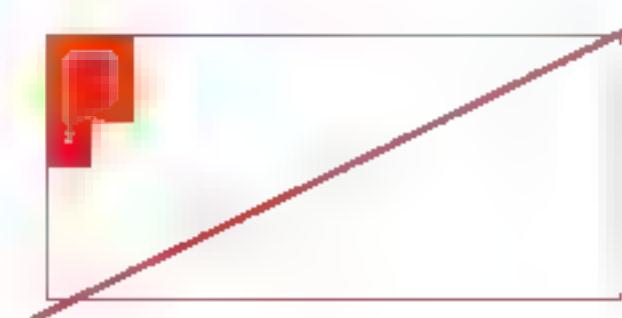
The cornerstone tile should always align to one of the four corners of the layout



Cornerstone tiles are never white. Use provided artwork



Don't use more than one cornerstone tile in a single layout



Additional tiles should never be smaller than the cornerstone tile



Don't use transparency with cornerstone tiles.

Photos that capture  
the real world we  
live in—authentic,  
optimistic, and brave



## Use the Microsoft photo libraries

Approved lifestyle and product photography is available for use in Microsoft communication materials. Avoid purchasing stock photography whenever possible.

For more information on creating photography assets, please visit Brand Tools or contact [corbrand@microsoft.com](mailto:corbrand@microsoft.com).



## Avoid off-brand treatments

The following is a short list of what to avoid when producing Microsoft photography.

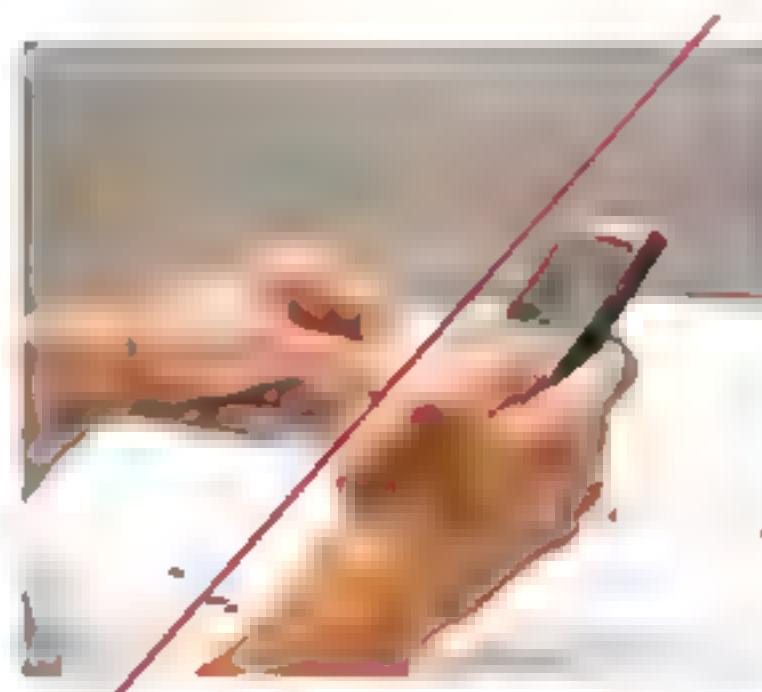
- Emotionless images
- Device-focused images that are not part of a bigger human story
- Clichéd scenarios or contrived settings
- Staged interactions
- Obvious posing
- Brand color
- Obvious post-production or Photoshop effects



Avoid emotionless images.



Don't use photographs in which the models are obviously posing



Avoid device-focused images that don't tell a human story.



Avoid staged interactions and brand color

Illustrate to communicate



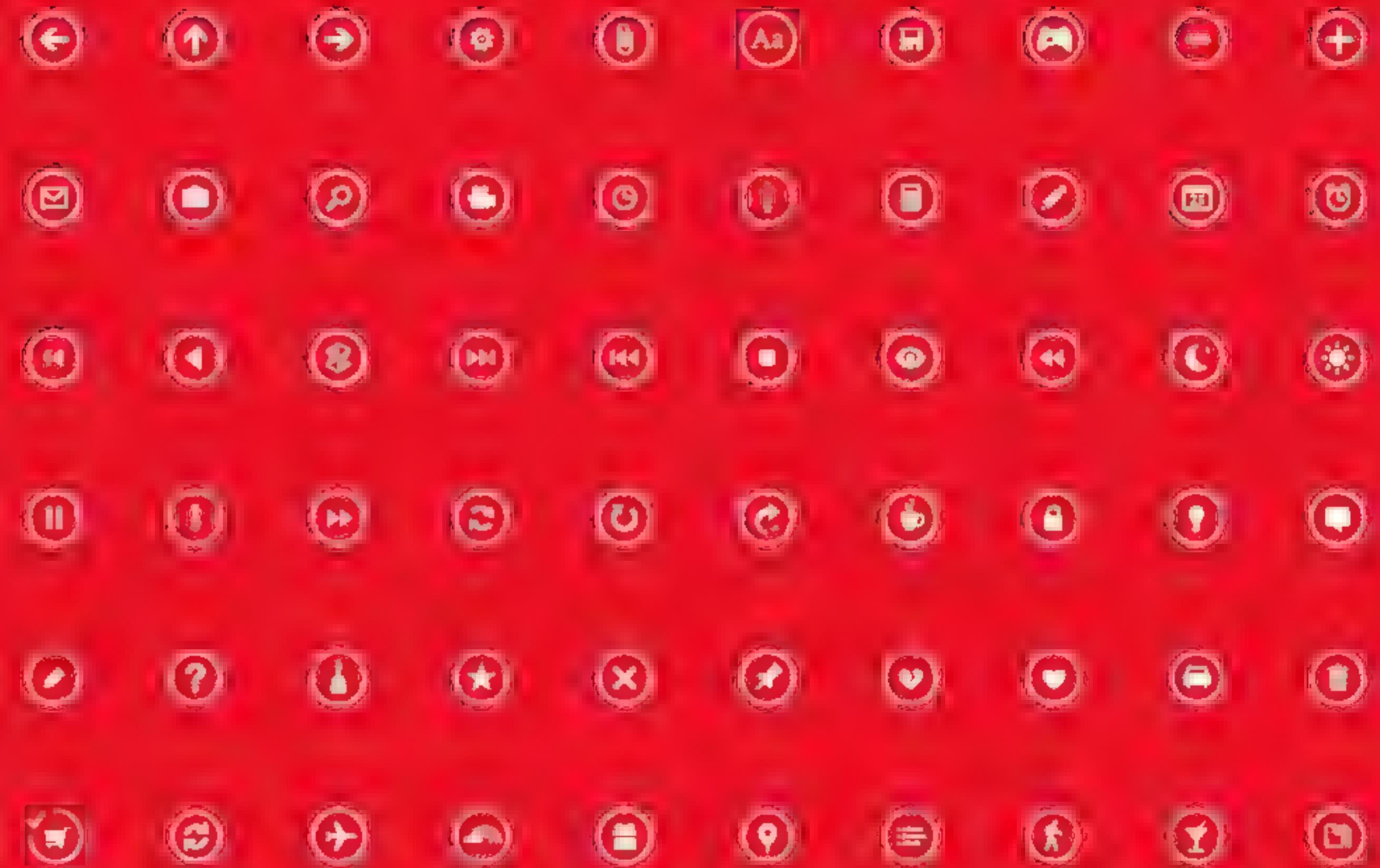
## Use distinctive, ownable images unique to Microsoft

Illustration is an important element of the Microsoft visual system. As with photography, you should not purchase stock illustration.

If you need to create illustrations for your communication, please contact [corbrand@microsoft.com](mailto:corbrand@microsoft.com) for guidance.

- Illustrations tell stories and convey ideas.
- They are simple and made up of geometric shapes.
- Use flat colors from the Microsoft palette.
- Use illustration when photography won't work.
- Illustrations should be witty but not cartoonish.
- They are vector-based artwork.
- Never use illustration as decoration.

## Icons Inform



## Use icons to convey information, not for decoration

Icons are primarily used in on-screen scenarios where they are actionable. They should be used rarely in print and marketing communication.

Microsoft has many icons and icon libraries. Do not create a new one if one already exists.

Contact [corbrand@microsoft.com](mailto:corbrand@microsoft.com) for additional information or visit BrandTools.

- Use icons where there is a clear function or where words won't work.
- Icons should only appear in white or black. They may be placed within tiles or separately.
- Icons should never be used decoratively.
- Stay true to the medium. Don't try to make an icon look realistic. Eliminate the chrome.
- Don't use an icon to represent a complex message.
- Don't use an icon if the message can be communicated in another way.
- Don't overuse icons.

Putting it all  
together

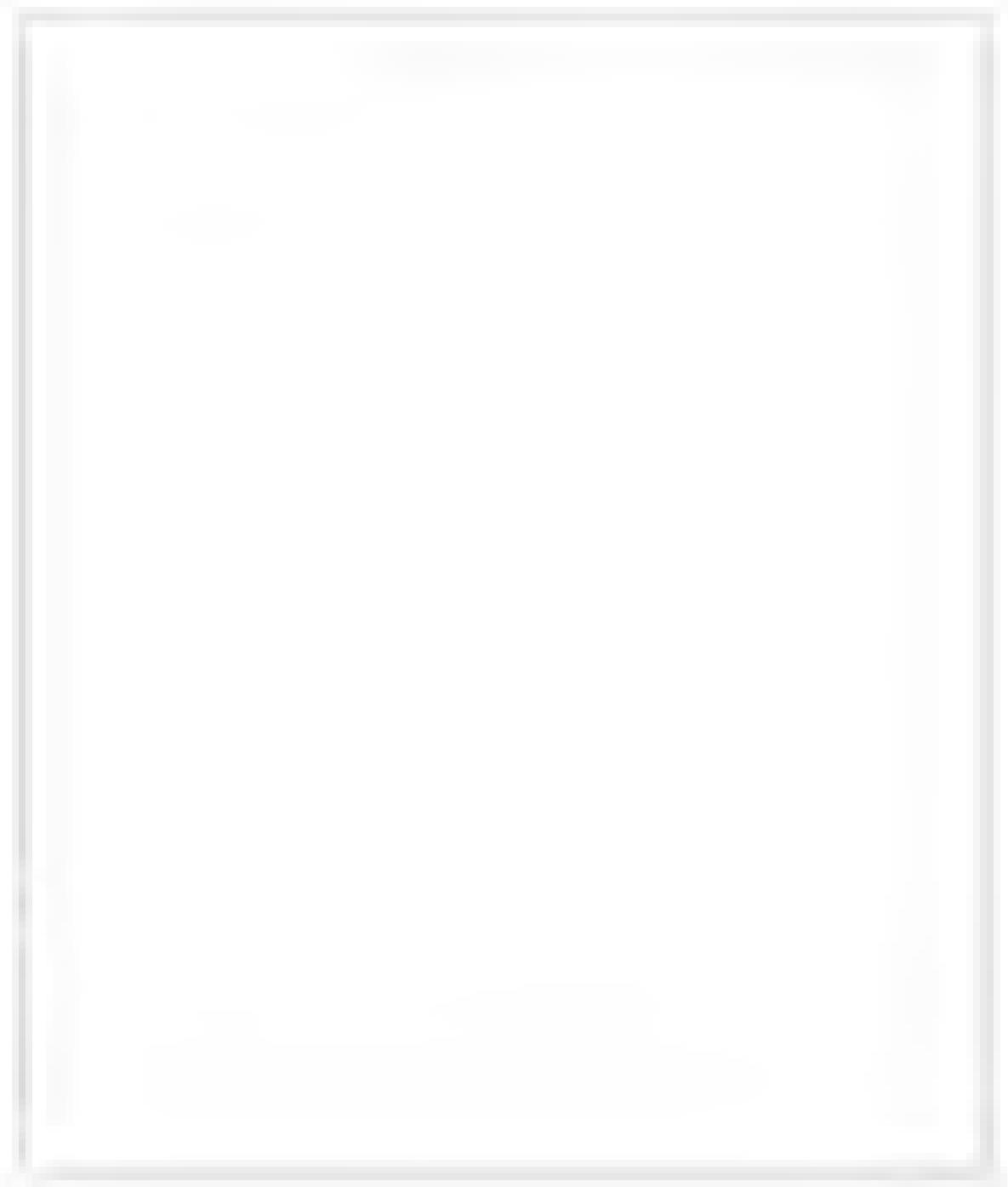
Our brand elements come  
together to tell stunning stories  
that celebrate and delight  
people across the planet.

## Step 1: Determine whether your layout will have a border

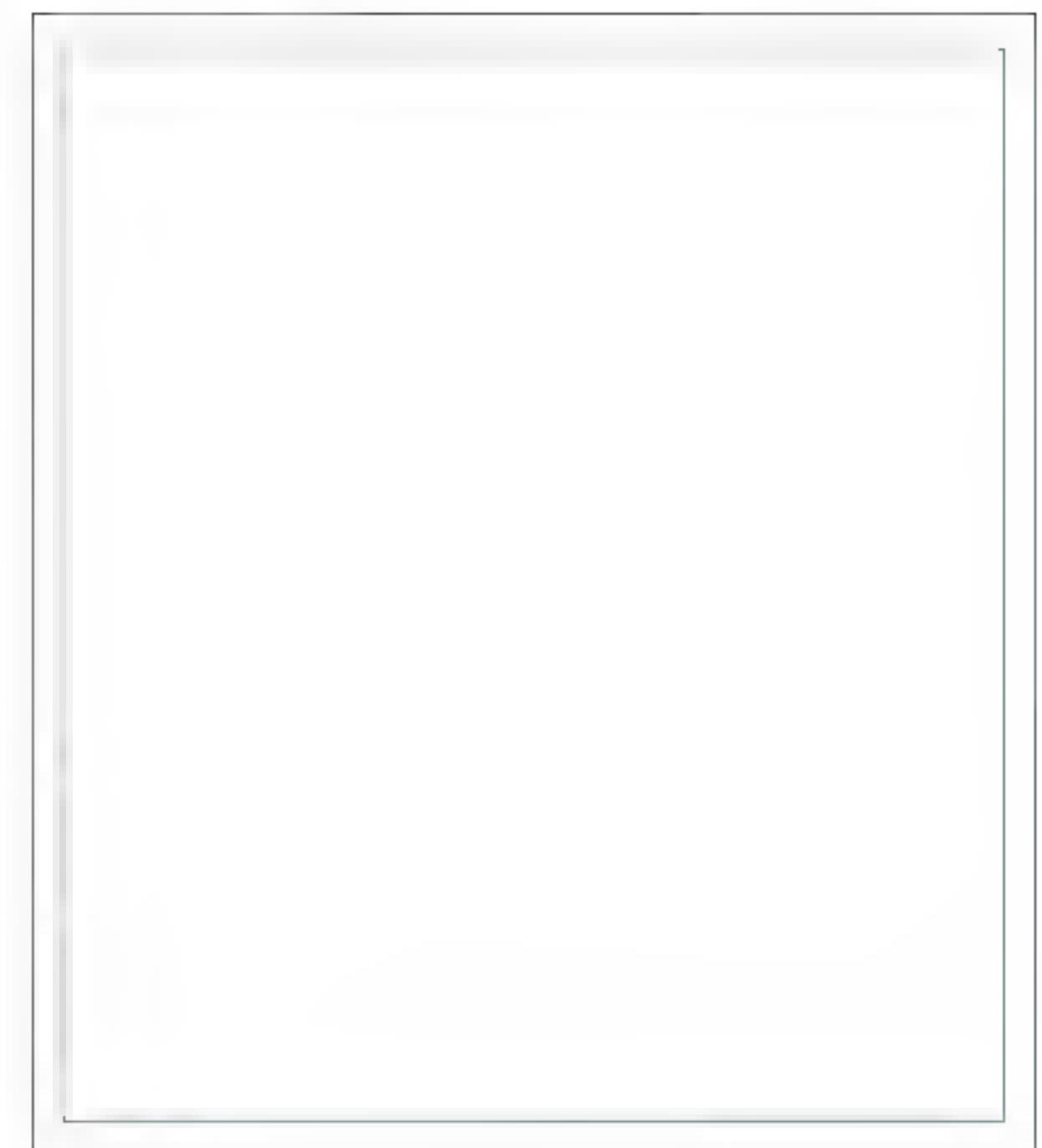
Your layout may "bleed" to the edges of the working area, or you may add a border which can later be filled with color or imagery. The size of the border is flexible, but it must have an equal thickness on all sides. In some cases the "live area" will determine what the border needs to be so you do not lose important content because of projection or print limitations.

Once a grid has been established, the same grid needs to be used through the entire multi-page document or layout.

Layout without border



Layout with border

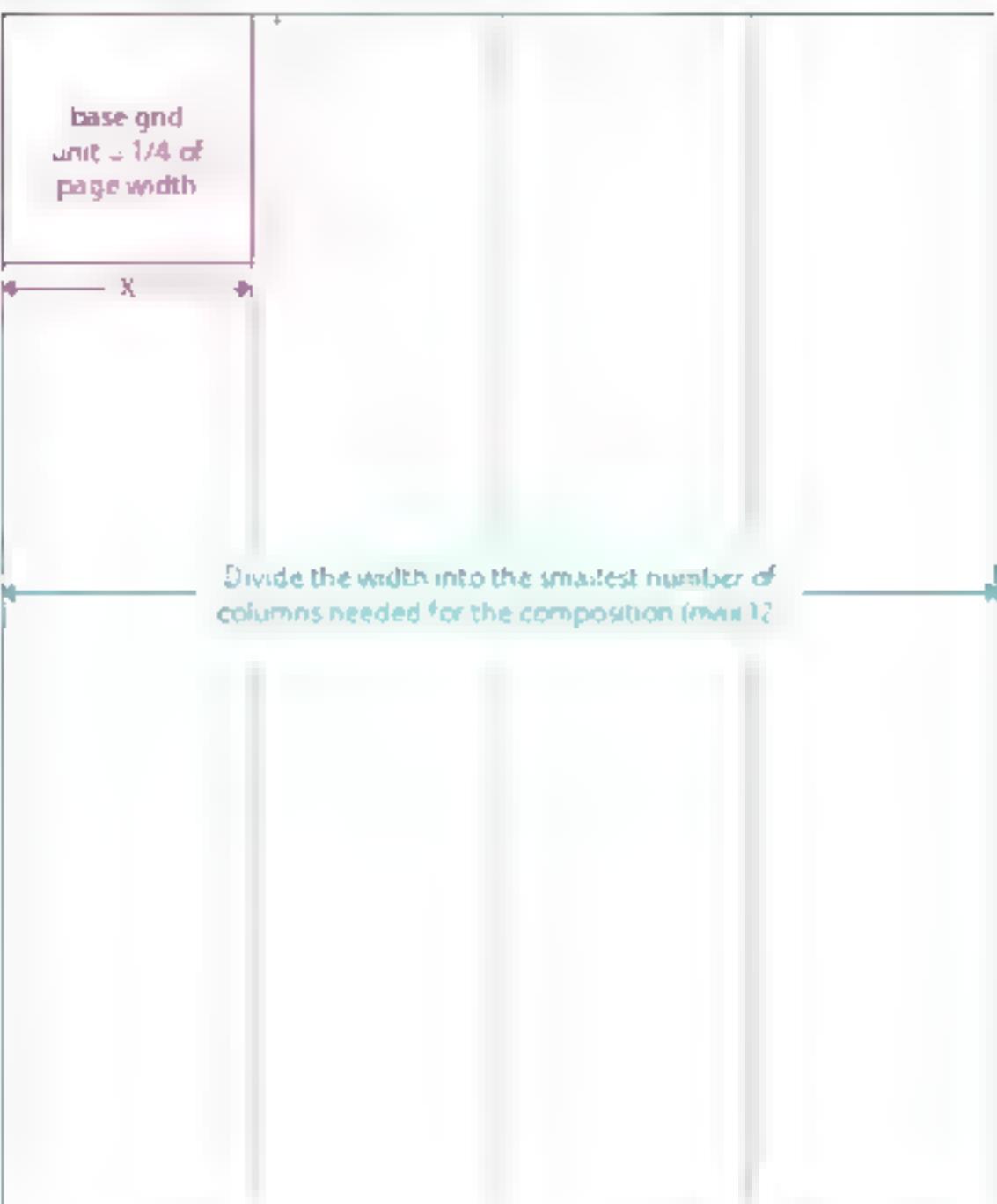


## Step 2: Define your columns or rows and the base grid unit

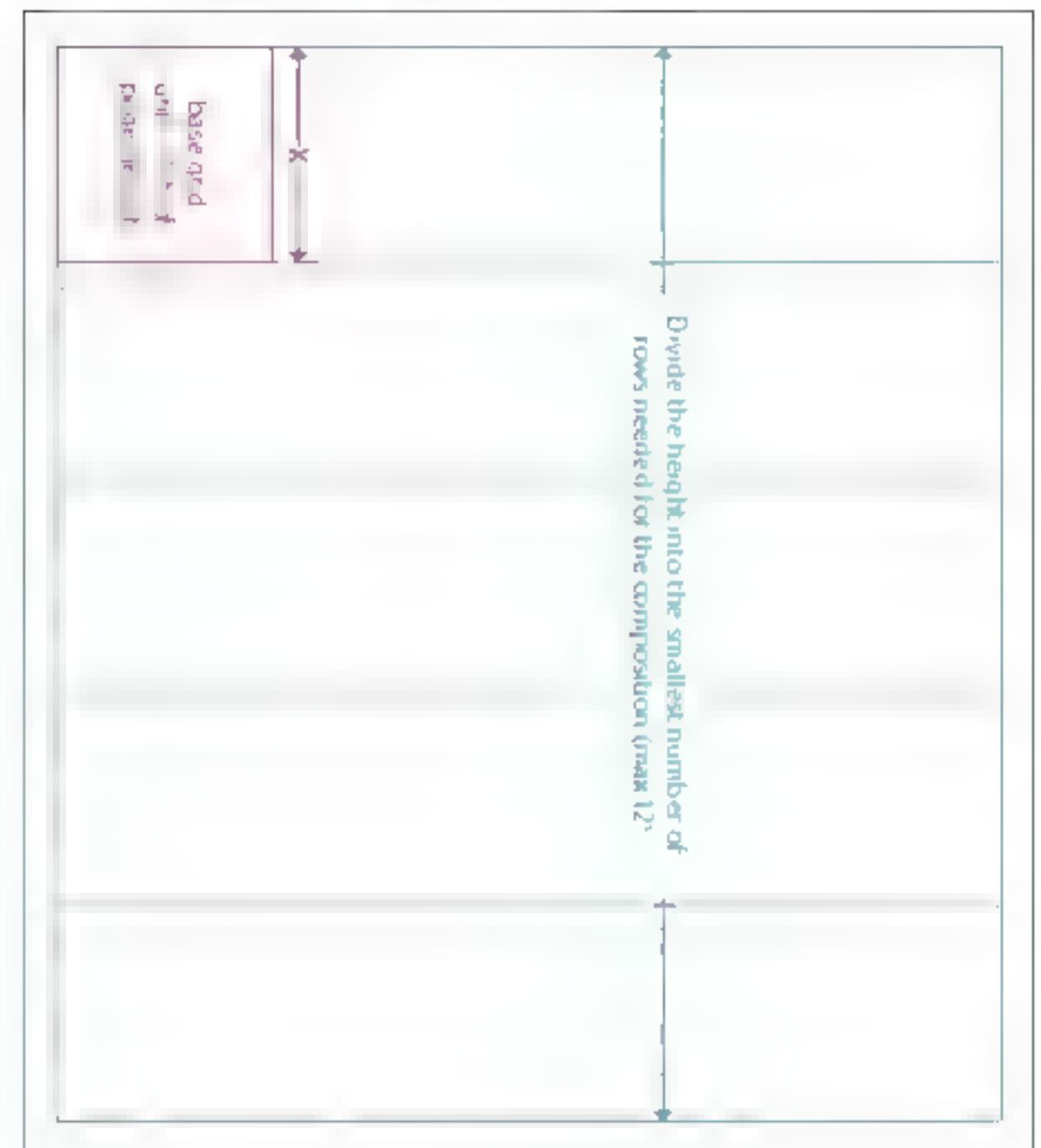
Choose the width or height of your layout (usually the larger of the two, but not always) as your defining dimension. Divide that dimension into the minimum number of columns or rows needed for the composition (maximum of 13).

Use this dimension ("X" in the diagrams at right) to create a square in one corner of your layout. This is the base grid unit from which you will derive the rest of your grid elements.

Grid with a horizontal defining dimension



Grid with a vertical defining dimension

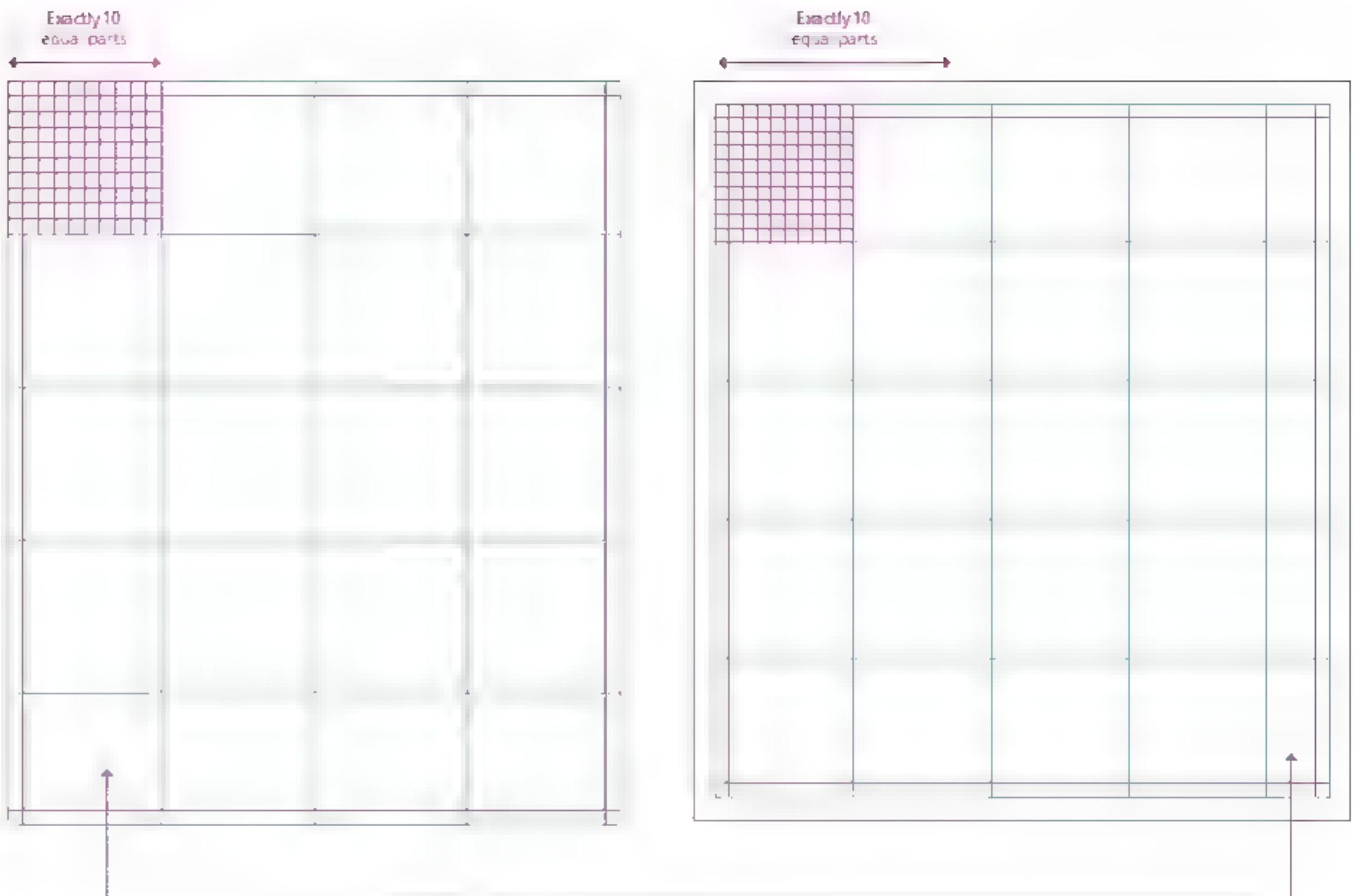


## Step 3: Finish the base grid and establish margins

Finish the rest of the base grid (shown here in blue lines) using the unit established in step 2. If you began by establishing columns, this means drawing the rows. If you started with rows, this means drawing the columns.

Next, divide the base grid unit into exactly 10 equal parts in both directions. Use one or two of these units as the exterior margin for your document. If your layout will include a cornerstone tile, use one grid unit as your margin to ensure proper alignment.

Use this same measurement as the interior margin between your rows and columns. If your design includes an outer border, then this margin is an additional space inside that border.

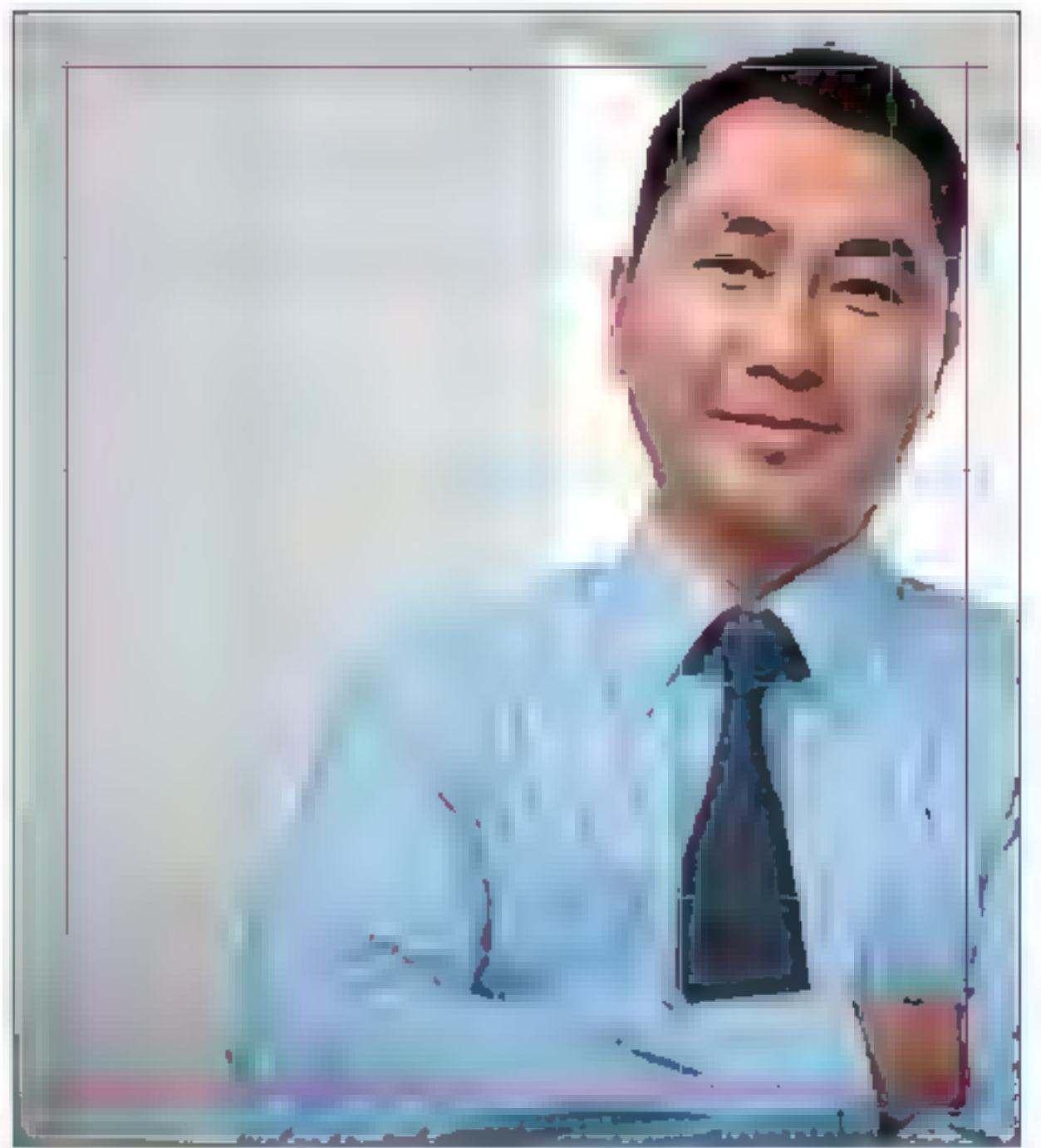


### Note

When you create an equal margin on all sides of your layout, it's acceptable if the margin guide doesn't align perfectly with the grid along one edge.

## Step 4: Add a background photo or color

Backgrounds may be left blank or filled with color or imagery



## Step 5: Add the logo (and the cornerstone tile for internal communications)

The logo is generally placed in one corner of the layout. Regardless of where it's placed on the page, it should be left-aligned with the text grid.

If your communication will contain a cornerstone tile, it may be placed in any corner of the layout. Whichever corner you select will become the singular point from which all other layout elements emanate.

The cornerstone tile occupies exactly one full unit of the base grid (shown here as blue lines).

If there's an outer border around your layout, the cornerstone tile aligns inside the border.

External communication



Internal communication, including cornerstone tile



## Step 6: Add content tiles

Content tiles align to the document grid (blue lines) and may be any whole number of grid units in size. The first one must be adjacent to the cornerstone tile. Additional tiles are added adjacent to one another.



## Step 7: Add headlines and text

Align blocks of text to the interior margins that you established when building the grid (shown here in magenta). Text blocks may span multiple columns and rows, but they should always align in the upper-left corner of established margin boxes.

Remember to limit the number of type sizes to three whenever possible, and keep type flush left.



## Tips for type and hierarchy

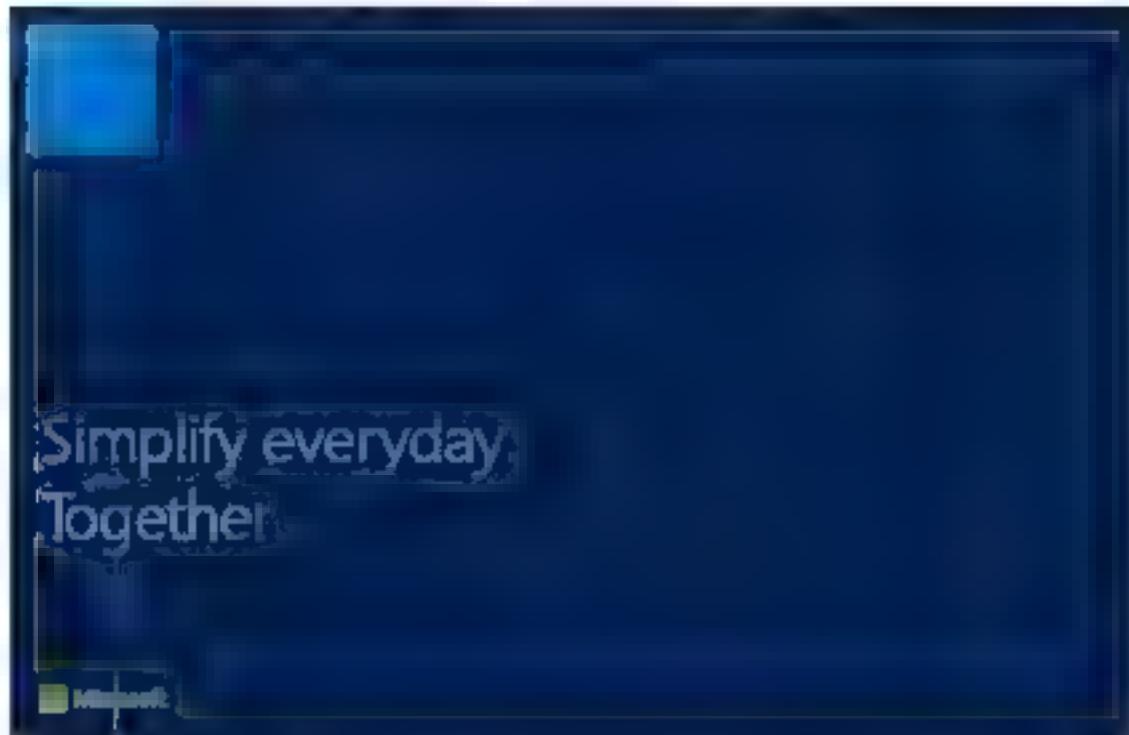
There are three primary categories of messaging that we use in the layouts in addition to the group name

- 1 Headlines
- 2 Subheads
- 3 Copy

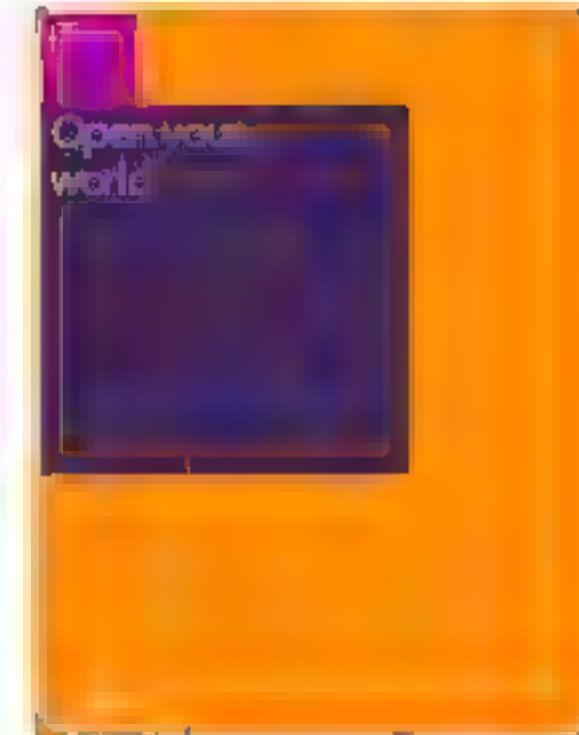
When the cornerstone tile is the same height as a second color field, the subhead should be the same type size as the logo or group name

When two or more categories of messaging are used, there should be a clear type size hierarchy

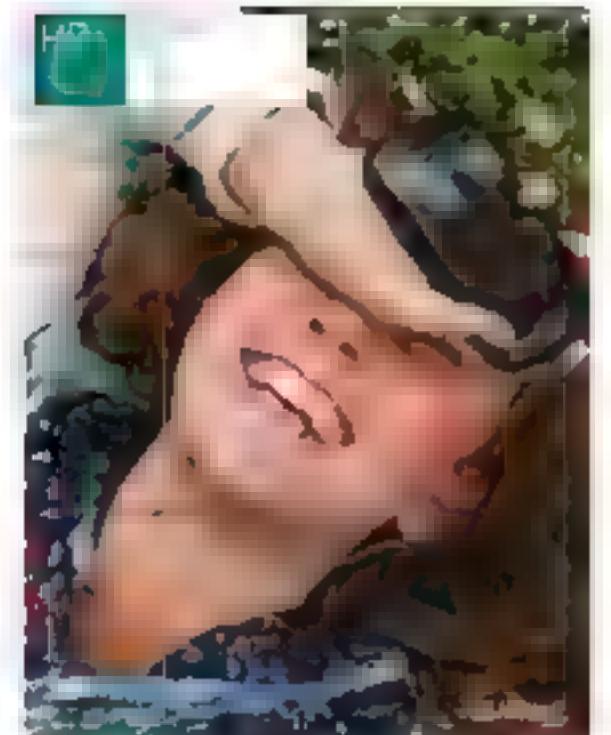
Cornerstone tile + headline or subhead



Headline



Headline



Subhead

Tiles + headline + body copy



Headline Copy



Headline Copy



Subhead Copy

Speak  
your mind

Headline

Showcase some examples of what's possible with our visual identity system.

What we want people to think:

It's fresh

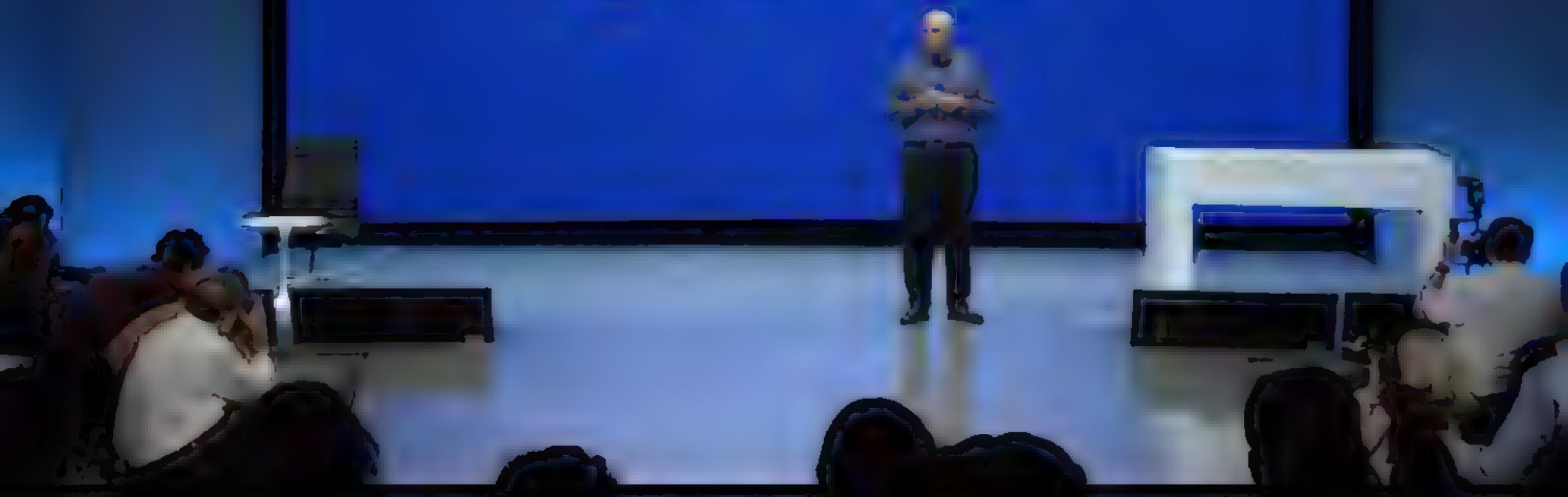
It's simple and easy

It's helpful

It's beautiful—I want it

It feels like Microsoft

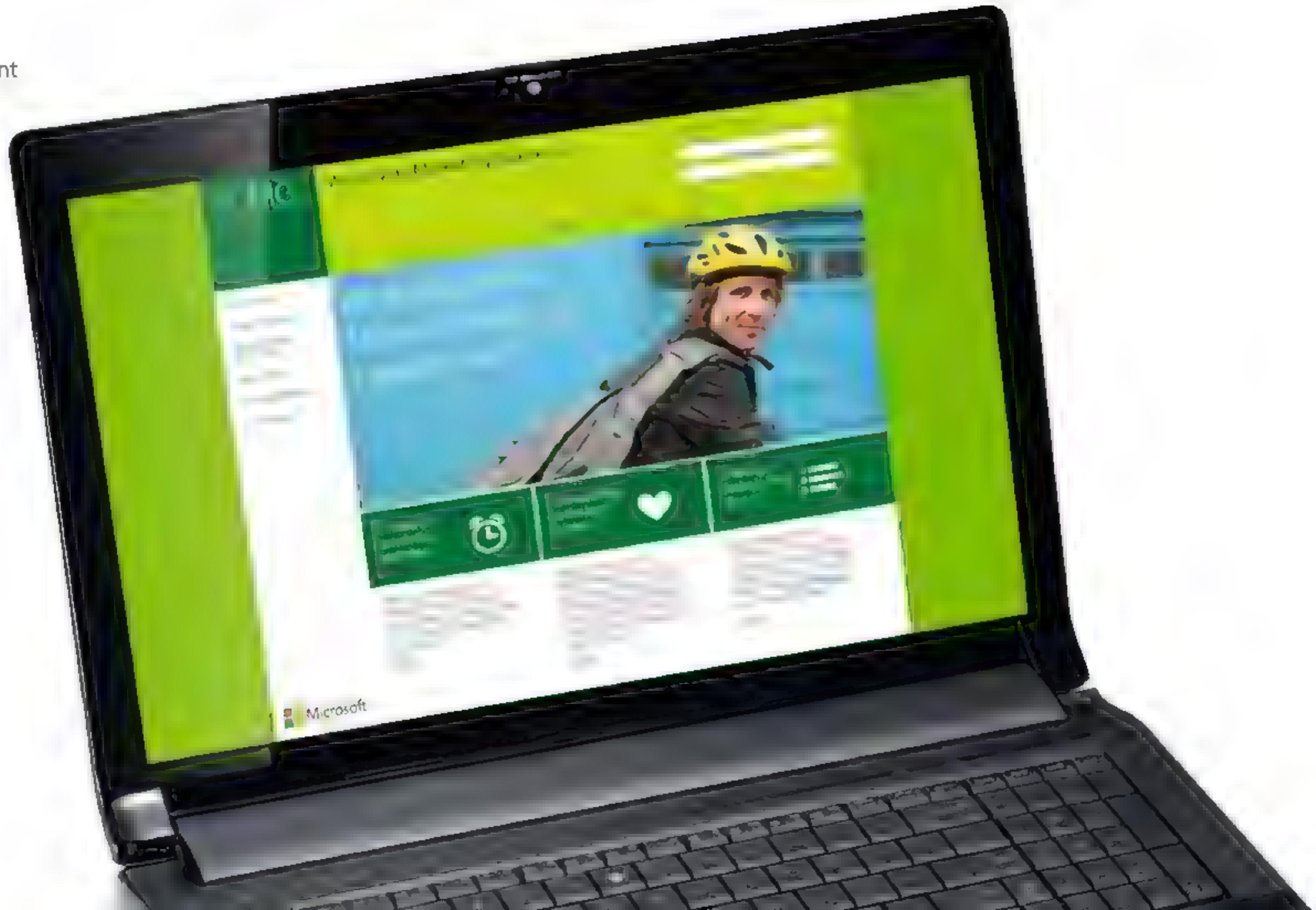
PowerPoint



## Internal SharePoint



## Internal SharePoint



## Print ads



External communication



Internal communication



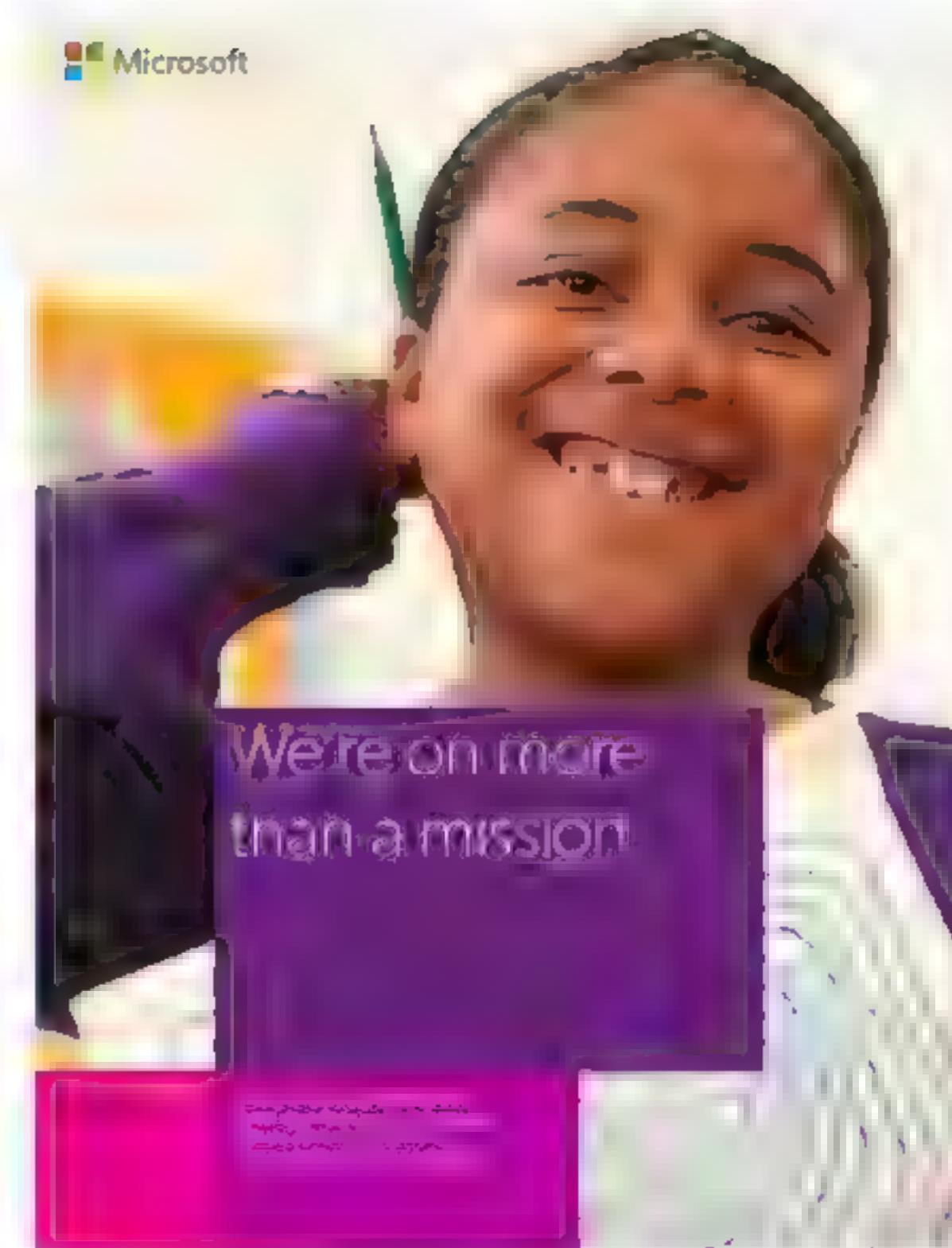
Print ad



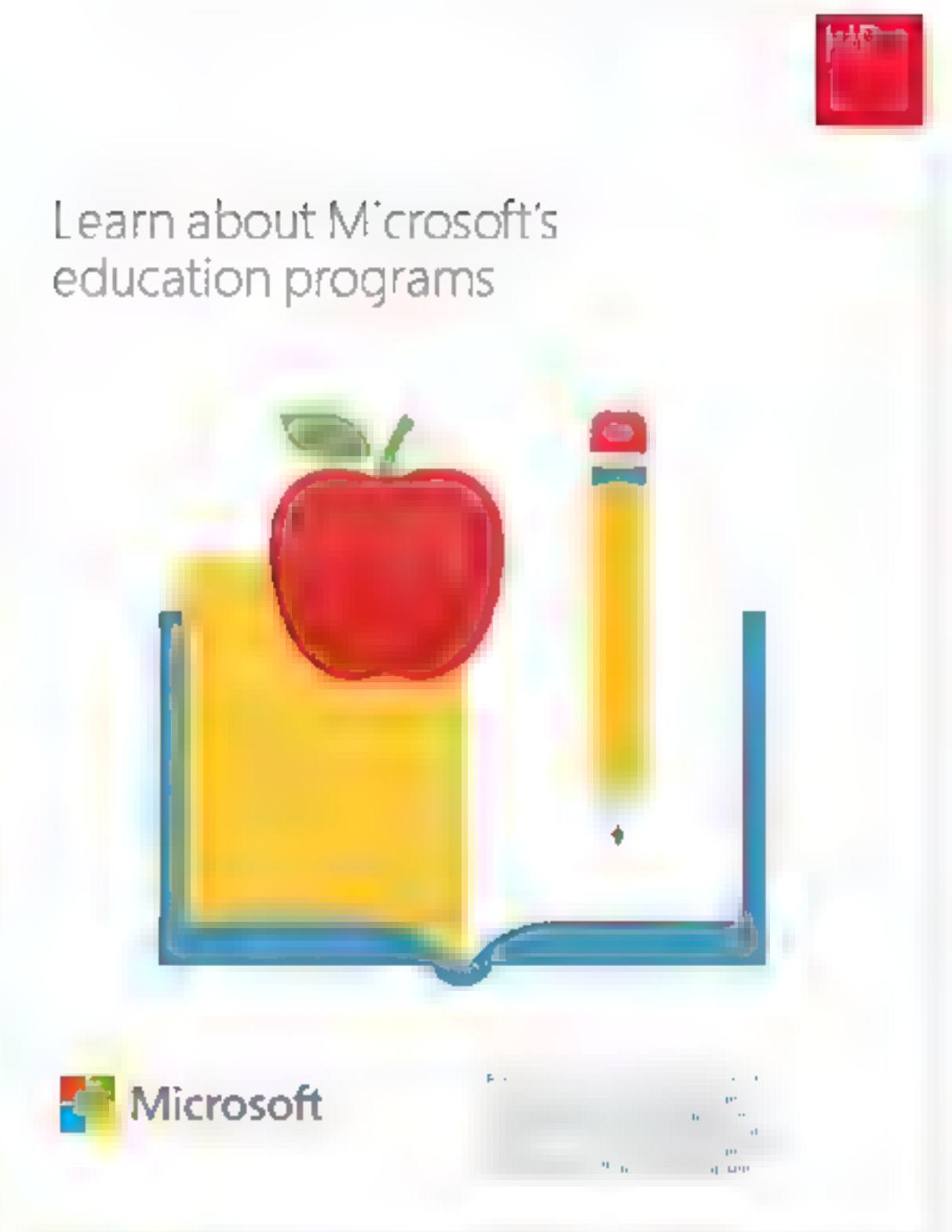
## Posters



External communication



Internal communication



Internal communication

## Vertical event banners



External brochure



## External PowerPoint



## External Banners

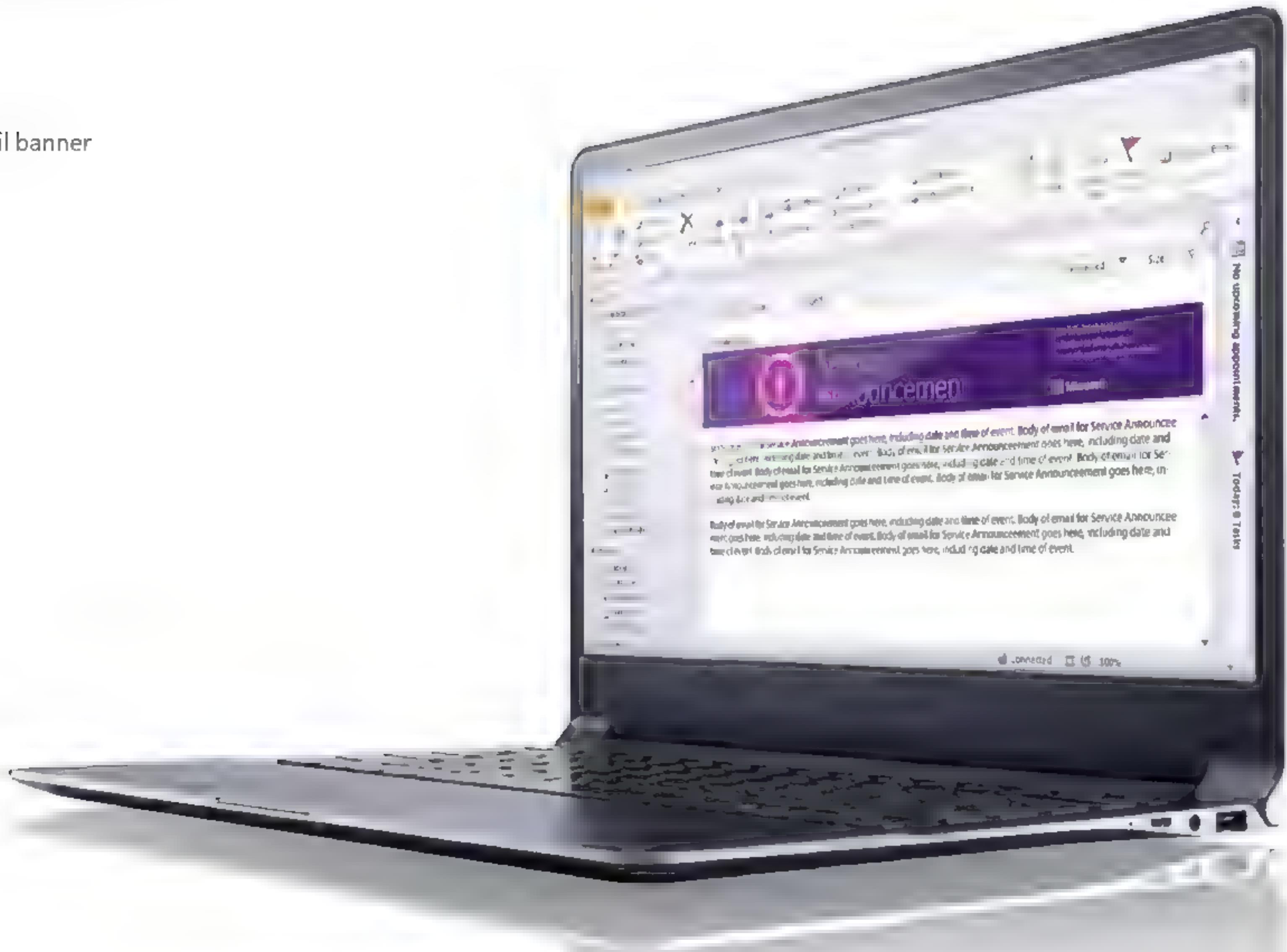
It's time for the  
next wave.

External banner  
with a call-to-action  
button

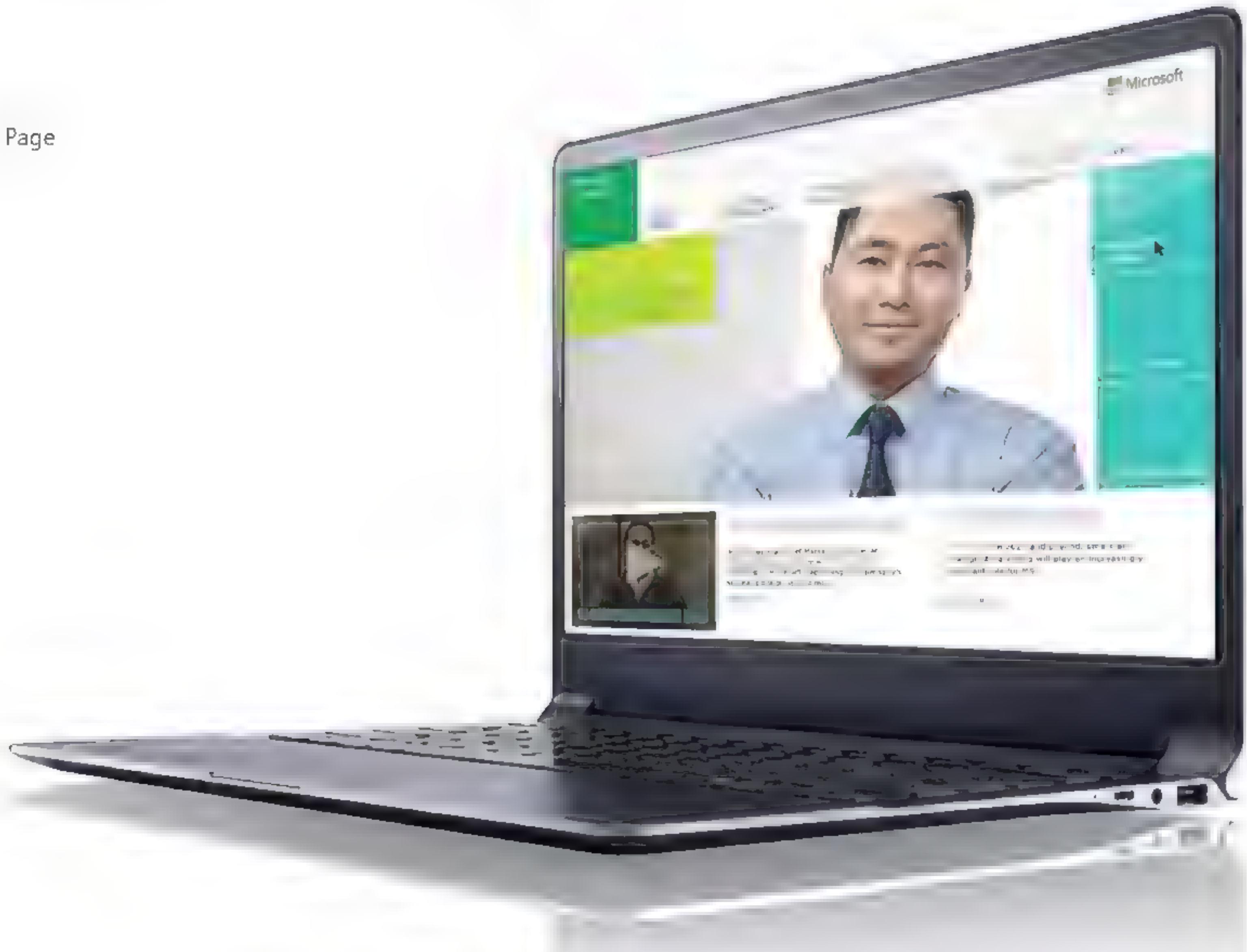
Report covers



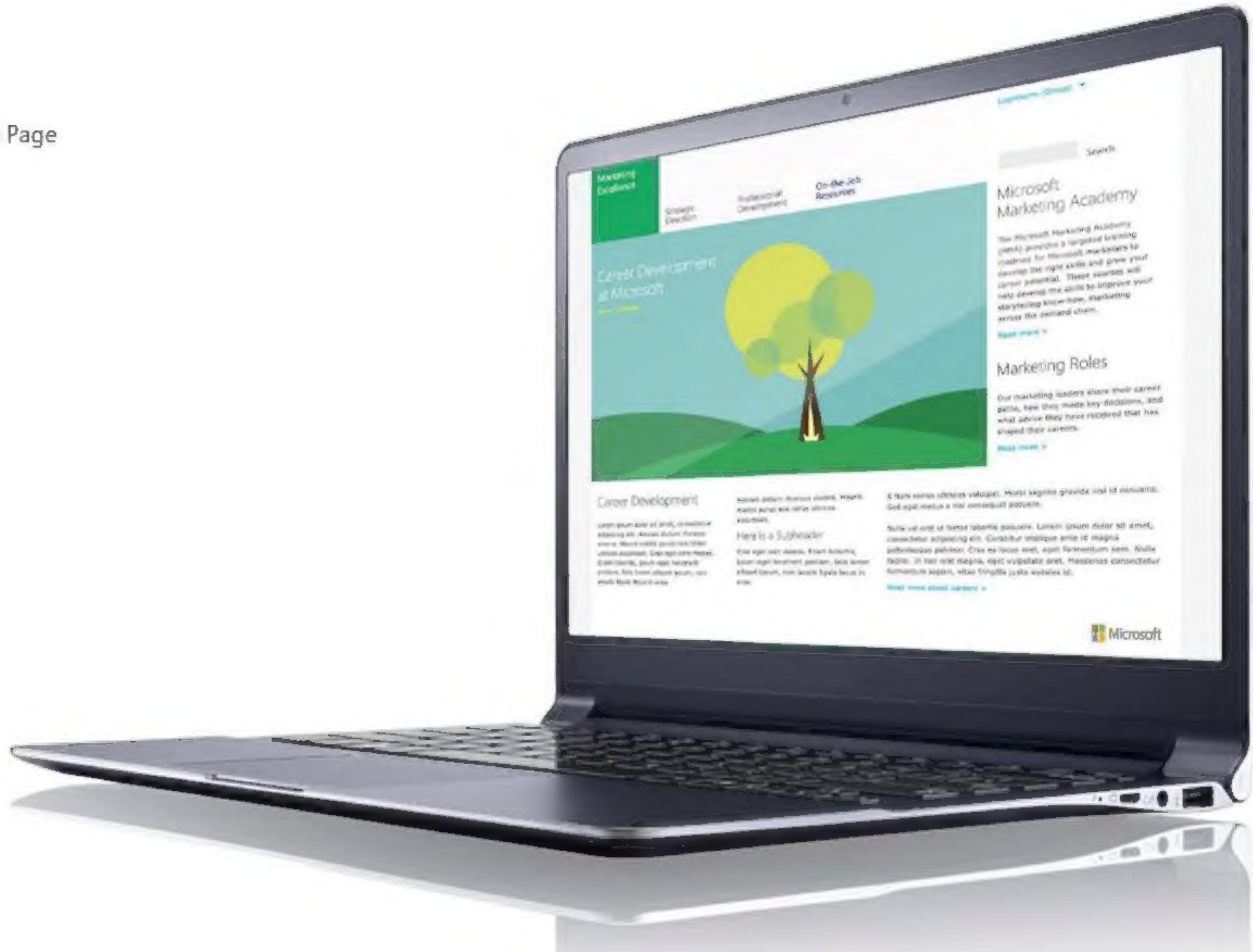
## Email banner



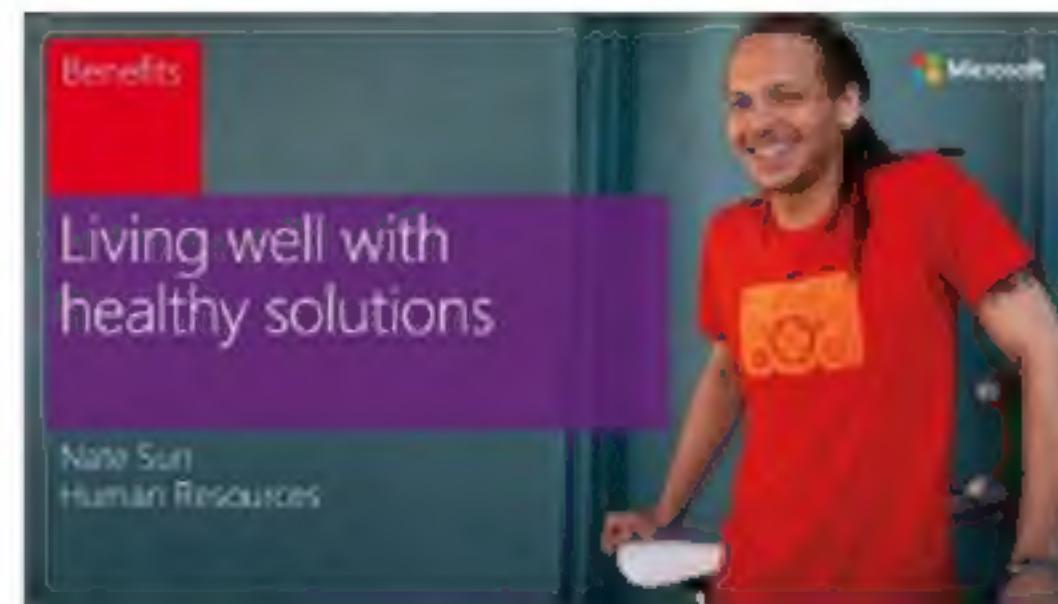
## Web Page



## Web Page



# Templates



Powerpoint presentations



Email signature



Datasheet



Whitepaper



Newsletter

## Design matters

If you've just read these guidelines, you have our appreciation. It means you share our belief in details and quality. We know applying these principles takes time and effort, but the stories we tell in all our Microsoft communications will be stronger for it.

Brand Tools has additional resources and guidance on the entire Microsoft brand. If you ever have additional questions about our visual identity and its application in design, don't hesitate to contact corbrand@microsoft.

 <https://brandtools.microsoft.com>



# Thank you